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As head of one of the strangest and most unique departments in the annals of police history, Captain Ayers, in his sixteen years of leadership, has dealt with some 350,000 cases of disappearances, covering all sorts of motives, ranging through all strata of society, from the highest to the lowest. And of these 350,000 cases of voluntary or involuntary disappearance he has solved 98 per cent—sometimes easily, sometimes with great difficulty.

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Frederick L. Patry, M.D., Psychiatrist, State Education Department, University of the State of New York, writing in the March, 1934 issue of the Medical Review of Reviews, says of Captain Ayers:

"To the psychologically minded, Captain Ayers' philosophy of life will ring with considerable soundness. 'I live from day to day and cross no bridges in advance. Cynicism has no place in my make-up. I strive to be not too distrustful of people, accepting them at face value until something develops which causes me to change my opinion, then I deal with the situation accordingly'."

No police officer, of any rank, or of any day, any place, has been commended for his work by press and leading periodicals as has Captain Ayers. He is almost as well known in Europe as in the United States.

Now retired from office, Captain Ayers has set about reviewing in his mind what were his most unusual and interesting cases, both solved and unsolved during his term of office. He has picked out several of these, and will tell in thrilling detail the story of each from his point of view, for the first time in any magazine, for Mystery Magazine readers! The real inside story, the gripping human interest drama of the game of eternal hide-and-seek between unhappy men and women who want to be forgotten, and the sleepless trailers who won't let them vanish into thin air!

Working with doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, clergymen and others who are experts on matters of the body and soul, Captain Ayers has brought to these stories an unusual combination of human, tender, understanding qualities, aside from his vast knowledge and practical experience in his world of missing men. We recommend them to Mystery readers as the finest series we have published in many months.

Now that we have introduced Captain Ayers, you will find his first dramatic story on page 17.

VOL. XII · NO. 1 JULY, 1935

MYSTERY

CATHERINE McNELIS, PUBLISHER

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VERNE NOLL, *Art Director* • DURBIN LEE HORNER, *Managing Editor* • AMY VANDERBILT, *Director of Home Service*

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RUBY KEELER

STAR OF WARNER BROTHERS' "GO INTO YOUR DANCE"

GUILTY By Circumstance!

By

CHARLES ROSENBERG, JR.

Member of the Pennsylvania Bar

Tower Studios

Do you know why lawyers, juries and judges behave as they do? Here is the third of a series of articles explaining the complicated and obscure workings of justice, published with the intention of helping MYSTERY readers to understand and acquaint themselves with the peculiar behavior of our American courts

THE District Attorney gesticulated vehemently.

"And we'll show you, members of the jury," he shouted, "that the body of this frail woman, dead as a result of a brutal blow that fractured her skull, was found on the morning of May fourteenth lying in the bushes within a few feet of the Wilson Highway. We'll prove to you by unimpeachable witnesses that the defendant's automobile was found abandoned on the road less than fifty yards from her body and that the upholstery and one of the doors of his car were stained and smeared red with a substance found by chemical analysis to be human blood."

Soundlessly a newspaperman leaned over the shoulder of the attorney for the defense.

"How does it sound to you?" the reporter asked.

Defense counsel smiled grimly. "I think he can prove everything he says."

"Why, that's admitting that the State has the case in the bag, and—" the reporter pointed out. But the Court's gavel ended the conversation.

The State's case moved swiftly. Henry Ames, a milkman, testified to seeing the abandoned car at about five o'clock in the morning and reporting it to the nearest police station. Officer Callahan and Officer Harris testified that they had gone out to bring in the car and had noticed in the nearby bushes the object which turned out to be the dead woman's body. The police surgeon who first examined the body gave it as his opinion that death had been caused by a severe blow resulting in a fracture of the skull. The scalp, he said, had been badly lacerated and there had been considerable bleeding. The official chemist introduced his analysis of the bloodstains found in the abandoned car.

"George Douglas," called the District Attorney as the chemist stepped down from the witness stand. A youth of about twenty-two seated himself in the witness chair and was sworn.

"Are you related to Margaret Douglas, whose death has been testified to here today?" the District Attorney asked.

"I am her son."

"Were you at the time of your mother's death or prior thereto acquainted with William Stewart, the defendant here?" The District Attorney gestured toward the defendant's table, where sat a dark-haired boy no older than the witness.

"Yes. We were classmates at college."

"Did your mother know him?"

"She became acquainted with him through me, and he became a regular visitor at our home."

"Who lived at your home?"

"Just my mother and myself. My father died some years ago."

The District Attorney paused before asking the next question.

"Describe briefly in your own words," he said at last, "the development of the acquaintanceship between your mother and this defendant."

Distress and embarrassment flickered across the youngster's face, but after a moment he began to speak in an even, unemotional tone.

"My mother and Bill," he said, "quickly became very friendly. They began going around together to theaters and public places. I did not like it. I felt that people would be talking about it. My mother was very trusting and laughed at me when I spoke to her about Bill. She said she was old enough to be his mother and was simply being kind to a lonely boy. I felt there was something unwholesome in Bill's attitude toward my mother, and I asked him to stop coming to our home and to stop seeing her. He said that as long as she was satisfied, it was none of my business. I had a quarrel with him about it a week or so before my mother's death."

"How old was your mother?"

"She was forty-four when she died."

With adroit questioning the District Attorney slowly drew from the boy a startling picture of a middle-aged mother and her mildly hectic friendship with her son's classmate. Had the college boy gone too far in forcing his attentions on the woman who had meant only to be kind to him? Had she in her distress and dismay threatened to tell of things he had attempted? Had he then decided that he must silence her by death, and had he, even while she was reproaching him as they sat in his automobile on the lonely highway, carried out his murderous purpose? The State's case pointed strongly in that direction.

"Cross-examine," said the District Attorney crisply, turning over the witness to the defense.

"No questions," announced the attorney for the defense. An audible murmur of surprise ran through the courtroom. With swift, incisive questions, the District Attorney disposed of two other witnesses through whom he proved the license numbers on the car and the fact that title to the car was registered in the name of the defendant.

"The State rests," he announced abruptly.

"The defense moves for a directed verdict of acquittal," stated defense counsel, rising to address the Court.

"On what ground?" inquired the Court.

"First, there has been no evidence introduced here tending to connect this defendant, either directly or indirectly, with the act that caused death. There has been no evidence tending to place this defendant at the scene of the crime at or near the time of its probable commission.

"Second, the State's case is based entirely on circumstantial evidence and while circumstantial evidence may admittedly be in some cases far stronger and far more credible than the testimony of human witnesses, nevertheless, it is fundamental in such cases that, to convict, not only must all the circumstances proved be consistent with the theory that the accused is guilty, but also inconsistent with the possibility that he is innocent and inconsistent with every other reasonable theory except that of guilt. In this case, whether or not the circumstances be consistent with guilt, they are certainly entirely compatible with this defendant's innocence.

"It is quite possible that this car could have been stolen off the street by unknown persons, who might either have murdered this unfortunate woman or killed her by accident and to disguise their own guilt abandoned the car and left her body where it was found. But for the purposes of this case, it is unnecessary to speculate on how the woman died. The plain fact is that there is nothing to connect the defendant with the crime, if there was a crime, and no proof that there was any connection between his car and the manner in which she met her death. The bloodstains in the car have no necessary or inevitable bearing on the killing of the deceased. There is no circumstance proved by the State tending to show that this defendant was in or near the car at the time of the victim's death or that he was remotely connected with her death in any way."

The Judge turned to the District Attorney.

"I think there is merit in the defense argument," he said slowly. "The law (*Please turn to page* 68)

NOW THAT I HAVE YOU...THERE'LL BE *No More Ladies*

An airy love bandit "swears off" the ladies when he meets his heart's desire—only to forget all about his promise the minute her back is turned! He's permanently cured of his roving eye—and the way it's done makes "No More Ladies" the season's gayest romance! Joan and Bob are at their very best in roles perfectly suited to them—while Charlie Ruggles, Franchot Tone and Edna May Oliver add to the merriment... Another delightful Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, perfectly adapted from New York's laughing stage hit.

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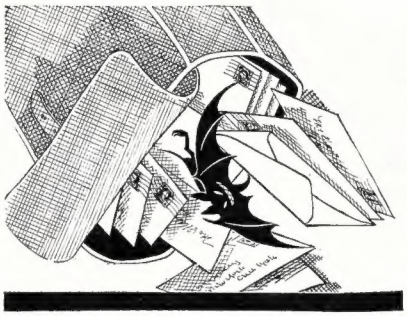
with **CHARLIE RUGGLES....FRANCHOT TONE....EDNA MAY OLIVER**

A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Picture.....Directed by EDWARD H. GRIFFITH

A REAL DEPARTMENT FOR MYSTERY READERS



The LINE-UP

The Scourge Impressed

PIEDMONT, CALIF.—Needless to say I enjoy MYSTERY MAGAZINE, as I am on my second year's subscription. I prefer book-length novels to continued stories, because, as each new number arrives, it means review the last month's, before I can get the connection.

While I am fond of mystery stories, I also greatly enjoy Whitman Chambers' Press Room series.

The plots are clever and reasonable. The dialogue, vivid, with caustic banter, is very amusing, because I know it is not exaggerated.

I hope to read more of them.

To my notion, "The Dead Don't Waken" by Belden Duff was the best mystery story in the May number. Also was impressed by John P. Frederick's "Are American Homes Threatened by China's Scourge?"

Mrs. H. F. Strother

To the Point

PORT HURON, MICH.—In my opinion MYSTERY MAGAZINE is about all that one could desire in a magazine. The type is large enough to be read easily, and the variety of stories and departments should please everyone.

I always read the "I Go Sleuthing" department, first. I also like the short stories.

"The Affair on the Roof" by C. Daly King, was excellent.

I also like the special features. "Health Swindlers" by D. E. Wheeler was worth more than the price of the magazine. I do not care for the serials, guess I haven't enough patience to bother with them.

Mary Nagle Kenney

Our Morals

LANSING, MICH.—I have a brother thirteen who enjoys reading more than any other recreation. I have bought many detective magazines (those being the kind he likes most), for him to read. Glancing through them I found they were very unmoral for anyone to read, let alone a boy as young as he is. One day he brought home the MYSTERY MAGAZINE. They are good clean stories. I myself enjoy them very much and so too does my mother.

I do hope you print this to let others know what one of your readers thinks of the moral tone of your magazine.

Mrs. Roy Culham

A Combination

NEW YORK, N. Y.—I've just discovered MYSTERY. The May number was so good that I've already become an addict. If you can get more stories like Q. Patrick's "Darker Grows the Valley" your publication will be a world beater. Q. Patrick seems to be one of the few writers who can combine a good thriller with good characterization and good style.

Robert E. Turner

A Difference of Opinion

BROOKLYN, N. Y.—I am going to give you a good talking to. For over a year I have been reading the MYSTERY Magazines, and enjoying them, but never in all my days did I ever read such a rotten issue as the May one.

It seemed to contain all of the old, old stuff that I thought I had gotten away with by not purchasing other detective magazines.

Your "Little Book of Strange Crimes" and "I Go Sleuthing" columns (pages I should say), are marvelous. Keep up the good work. But for goodness sakes, please get some decent *stories;* don't just pick any stories that are handed in, but go to the trouble of sorting them and picking out the best.

There are a few suggestions that I would like to make, but of course you say, just like a woman. But here goes.

1. Get some of the stories that you used to have, you remember them certainly—in the good old days.

2. Have some of those fantastic stories that we know never happen but which all readers love to read about.

3. And last but not least keep up the standard of MYSTERY MAGAZINE by listening to your readers and using your own judgment.

In conclusion, Gentlemen, I say:

I've bought your magazine.

I've read your magazine.

I've here written just what I think of your magazine.

Now publish a better one next month.

Miss V. Nagin

A Capitalist

OWENSBORO, KY.—I am not writing for the dollar you offer, but this is my honest opinion of the MYSTERY MAGAZINE.

It is, without a doubt, the best mystery magazine on sale today.

The only criticism I have to offer is that the MYSTERY MAGAZINE should be weekly and not monthly.

I thoroughly enjoyed "Her Husband's Guilt" by Beldon Duff, and "The Case of the Rigid Man" by Helgo Walters in the April issue.

Please print more stories like these.

Joseph Nall

Golly!

CHICAGO, ILL.—Six months after MYSTERY MAGAZINE was published, I gave it up, I guess the photography got me—also the stories were getting weak.

Seven months ago I decided to chance it again, and realized how unjust I had been to both the magazine and myself.

Your book-length mysteries are great, "The Woman Who Lived Too Long" and "Murder Madness"; golly, those stories alone surpassed my expectations, and the photography now is worth framing.

I am very much satisfied with everything you publish. Think you're great for giving us Theodore Dreiser.

Don't care for serials, but others might—so one wouldn't hurt.

As far as I'm concerned I know we'll be together. If ever I miss a copy of TOWER MYSTERY MAGAZINE it is going to be June in January.

Ray E. Block

No More Line-Up

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.—Is it absolutely essential to the future existence of MYSTERY MAGAZINE to continue such an uncharming column as your "Line-Up"?

To me, as a reader, what does it matter that So and So found something not in keeping with his or her reading tastes within the covers of your periodicals?

That is the other person's private opinion.

But, Americans love to give vent to their mental labors, and "push them," so to speak down the throats of the several editors of this nation.

"Are American Homes Threatened (*Please turn to page* 86)

Write your opinions and suggestions for MYSTERY MAGAZINE every month. Tell us what story you like best—who your favorite mystery writer is. For every letter published we will pay one dollar. And, remember, if you don't like this magazine, be frank and say so! Write to the MYSTERY Editor, Tower Magazines, Inc., 55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

The grandest of all melodramatic musical romances

With all the glory of her God-given voice... the star of "One Night of Love" brings you new hours of thrilling entertainment!

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TINTS AND DYES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
ROBERT SPECKMAN—VERNE NOLL

Jill realized that if she screamed and tore her hair now, she would go irrevocably mad.

BLACK CAT

A horror story of nightmare visions and breath-taking wizardry! A story that doesn't end—and one you won't believe

By LOUIS GOLDING

THE black cat with the white arrow appeared out of nowhere. He appeared in the school-room one gusty March day. Jill and Miss Derwen, her governess, were going down to tea, when Jill's mother called out from the drawing-room which was off the half-landing. Mrs. Heathcote wanted to speak to Miss Derwen for a moment; would she please come in. Miss Derwen concluded from the tone of Mrs. Heathcote's voice that the thing she wanted to speak about was not for Jill's ears.

"Go down to the school-room, darling," said Miss Derwen. "I'll be down at once."

So Jill tripped down the rest of the staircase into the nursery. She was a rather prim little girl and she closed the door behind her primly. It was so wet and blowy that only one of the windows was open and only for two or three inches; but even these few inches of March air made a draught and clatter during the few seconds the door was open. So Jill closed the door behind her.

She sat down at the tea-table where tea was laid for Miss Derwen and herself, expecting Miss Derwen to be down in a moment or two. But the moment or two prolonged themselves into a minute or two, during which Jill had ample time to look round. If there had been a black cat with a white arrow in the room, she would have noticed him then; unless he had got under the low chintz-covered sofa against the long wall, as he might have done. But there was, in fact, precious little room there, for all the toys and boxes of games that could not be stuffed into the cupboard were stacked under the sofa.

So Jill got up after a couple of minutes and went over to the window and stood there with her nose flattened against the pane, looking out on to the dripping grass and the straining trees. Then she turned round again, because she felt someone else was in the room besides herself. It was not Miss Derwen, for she had not heard any door open or close, and besides, you could usually hear Miss Derwen coming downstairs. for she was rather heavy-footed.

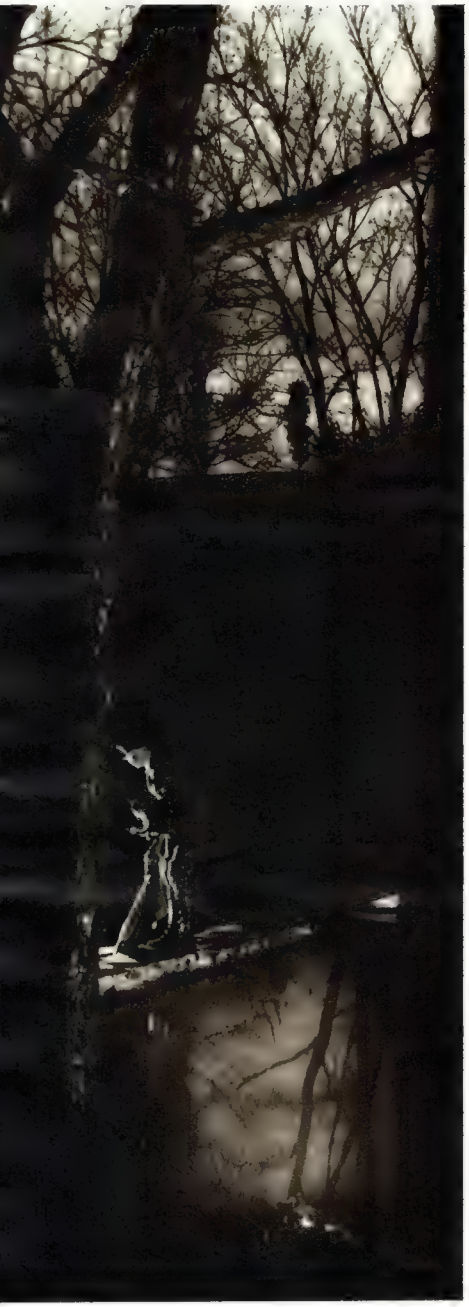
Jill was not alone in the room. There was a black cat on the tea-table. She noticed the little white arrow on his chest almost the very moment she noticed the cat himself. It looked like the white bow that her father wore when special people came to dinner and he put on the long black jacket, too. But it was a little lower down than that. The cat stood firmly arched on the table, lapping away at the milk-jug.

Jill was conscious of a slight sense of outrage. Her mother had had a tortoise shell cat until a few months ago, and it was so well-behaved it would rather have starved than jump on the table and lap the milk out of the milk-jug, at all events if there was a chance that anybody might be looking. Jill and the tortoise shell cat had never cared for each other very much, really. And then they had two terriers. Jill liked them much more than the tortoise-shell, and they were models of good behavior, too. Her mother and Miss Derwen between them saw that everybody in the house, human and animal, behaved with decorum.

That was one reason why Jill felt a little shocked

when she saw the black cat with the white arrow lapping the milk out of the milk-jug. It was all the more irregular because the cat wasn't even an inhabitant. He was a stranger. He had come out of nowhere.

She was shocked another way, too. The black cat looked so lovely, Jill almost stopped breathing for a moment. Her mother had a grand evening gown made out of black velvet, but the fur of the black cat was smoother and richer and silkier. The tongue was like a piece of coral, it made you want to jump it was so pretty. And the next moment you did not want to jump at all. The black cat looked up and he had green eyes like the grass outside the window with the rain on it. He looked up and looked at you steadily for two seconds, then he looked down at the milk-jug again and started lapping. You did not want to jump any more. You just wanted to stand there, and wait and wait, till he lifted his head and looked at you again.



Then Miss Derwen opened the door and came in. It showed that Jill had been thinking of the cat very hard, how lovely it was, and how pretty its tongue was, for she always heard Miss Derwen about the house. Miss Derwen did not walk softly, and the boards creaked all over the place.

"Oh, Miss Derwen!" said Jill. "Look!"

"Good gracious me!" said Miss Derwen. "A cat! The milk! Shoo!" she said.

"Oh no!" cried Jill. "It's lovely!"

The cat lifted his head and stared at Miss Derwen. Then he stared at Jill again. He did not move from the table.

"I never heard of such a thing!" said Miss Derwen. "Shoo!" she cried again, and advanced a step or two toward the table, and made a flapping movement with her hands. The cat straightened himself and stood for a moment four-square on the ebony pillars of his legs. Then he drew together for a spring and with infinite delicacy and precision bounded across the plate of bread and butter on to the sofa. There was a cushion there, Jill's cushion. She could not remember the time when she had not had that cushion. She preferred it to all her dolls, for it was a great deal more versatile. It could be a doll on demand, a railway-train, a magic carpet. It was also quite useful as a cushion, too. The black cat walked the few inches remaining to Jill's cushion and then took possession of it, as if it had always been intended for him. He squatted down on his haunches, passed his quick tongue round his mouth, then looked at Jill again, not so much at her eyes as at her mouth, as if he would understand what she said about him from the way her lips worked.

It was actually Miss Derwen who spoke next, but he took no notice of her. "However did you get into the room?" asked Miss Derwen. "Where did he came from? We shall have to get some more milk!"

"He's a Fairy Prince!" cried Jill, dancing about in her excitemnt, and clapping her hands. "He's a Fairy Prince! He didn't need to have to get into the room!"

"No doubt!" said Miss Derwen. She went and tugged at the bell-pull. "No doubt!" She was annoyed. She did not like the cat. You never know where cats have been and what they might bring in with them. He had been well-looked after, certainly, for his coat was in excellent condition. But he had been badly brought up. His manners were deplorable. Jumping up like that on to the table and lapping the milk out of the jug! She didn't like the way he looked at you, either, or rather, didn't look at you. He ignored you as if he knew you were not a lady, you were just a nursery-governess. It was very amusing and fanciful of the child, of course, to call the animal a Fairy Prince. You were responsible for it yourself, in a way. You were always making up tales along those lines for the child's entertainment. But the animal looked so haughtily pleased with himself to hear himself called a Prince to his face, it was really quite exasperating. Miss Derwen nearly tore the bell-pull off its wires.

"More milk!" she commanded. Doris nearly gave notice on the spot for being talked to like that by that Miss Derwen.

"Oh you lovely, you lovely!" Jill muttered in the black cat's ear, her arm flung round his body. "Where did you come from, lovely? Are you *really* a Fairy Prince, really and truly?"

Jill had said to Bennett: "I don't want to know how or where you'll drown it—so long as it gets done before tomorrow morning."

THE black cat with the white arrow made no reply for a minute or so. He merely sat and purred as if he were nothing more at all than a black cat. Then he put out his delicate rough tongue and passed it two or three times over Jill's cheek-bone. But Jill did not need that confirmation. She did not ask because she wanted to know. She wanted to let *him* know she knew. He was a Fairy Prince, over whom some wicked magician had waved his wand and made a black cat out of him. Some day a good magician would appear on the scene and wave another wand over him. He would become a Fairy Prince again, and on that day he would marry her.

After tea Jill always spent half-an-hour or so alone with her mother in the drawing-room. On this particular afternoon the black cat was with them, too. Mrs. Heathcote lifted her eyebrows grimly when Jill entered, with the animal sprawled across her outstretched arms. Someone had already told her about the intruder, and orders had already been given that it was to be unceremoniously shooed out of the house. But when Jill informed her with such simplicity and seriousness that the cat was not merely a Prince but her destined bridegroom, it seemed advisable to hold up the expulsion for an hour or two. She discussed the matter with her husband when he came in later that evening. Mrs. Heathcote felt that Miss Derwen should be recommended to keep fairy stories out of the child's curriculum for the future. They filled her head with stuff and nonsense. They also agreed that strange cats are hygienically undesirable and the visitor must be quietly discouraged in a day or two, if he had not slipped off on his own account in the meantime.

But the black cat did not slip off within the next day or two; and he really was a creature of such grace and beauty that it was difficult to believe he was a walking disease-carrier. Moreover, the child was head over heels in love with him. He was her Prince, she would one day marry him. He became as much a member of the establishment as Miss Derwen, who compromised herself with a visiting tennis champion and disappeared only a month or two later.

For several years Jill Heathcote maintained her belief quite unquestioningly in the identity of her black cat and the fate that one day was to bind them in holy wedlock. The belief survived the Santa Claus legend and the stork legend, and even stories like Alfred burning the cakes became a little fly-blown for her before she allowed herself to accept the heart-breaking truth that the black cat was not really a Fairy Prince but actually a black cat.

She got up one morning, being about eleven years old. Something had happened inside her during the night. When gray dawn came she had become a gray rationalist. With the tears streaming down her cheeks, she leaned over toward the cat, who lay, as usual, stretched across the foot of her bed with his four legs thrust straight before him, more like a dog than a cat. The cat opened his green eyes.

"No, darling, no!" she sobbed. "You're not! I've known it for a long time now. You're only a black cat, after all. But I love you just the same. Do you understand, darling? It makes no difference at all. I love you just the same."

The black cat made no reply, of course, for he was only a black cat. He lifted his head, as he had a habit of doing when Jill talked to him, and yawned lengthily. Then he put his head back on to the counterpane and closed his eyes.

He disappeared next day. Wringing her hands, and sobbing bitterly, Jill went calling after him all over the house and the garden, day after day. But he did not hear her, or, if he did, he paid no attention. He did not come back again.

Or, at least, not for a long time.

AFTER the black cat's disappearance, Jill Heathcote stopped being a rationalist for a year or two, though she had been a rationalist for only a day and a couple of nights. She relapsed into an almost savage superstitiousness again, though she was getting to be quite a big girl now, and would be going to boarding-school quite soon. She was convinced that she had herself driven her darling into the cold dark outer world by her wicked scepticism, and it certainly looked like it.

The cat looked at Jill as if he would understand what she was saying from the way her lips worked.

"Where did you come from, lovely?" murmured Jill. "And are you really and truly a Fairy Prince?"

For a year or so she was more than ever convinced that the cat was a Fairy Prince, though she had the gravest doubts that he would now agree to make her his Princess, after the way she had treated him. She was really a thoroughly sensible girl in most other respects, but she retained her fantasy for quite a long time, without letting anyone in the world suspect it. She even hid it from herself, or at least, from the greater part of her mind. The smaller part of her mind hung on like grim death.

She was about fifteen years old by the time she could see a black cat without examining it nervously to see whether it wore a little white tie or not. A year or so later she could bring herself to tell her friends the story of the black cat that had come and gone, and to laugh at it as heartily as the other girls. But she laughed a shade too heartily perhaps. There was a certain shrillness in her laughter.

MISS DERWEN used to say while Jill was quite a small girl that Jill had a beautiful voice and something ought to be done with it. When Miss Derwen left, Jill's voice was forgotten and it was only remembered again during her last year or two at school. It had been left to grow wild, like a garden, but it suddenly put on a beauty that astonished and even irritated her mother. After she had been at home about a year, Jill was sent to study singing in a very special little college of music in Knightsbridge and she had a room in a very special hostel for nice girls. She did well at the college and got one or two important parts in the rather severe little operas they performed for the Knightsbridge intelligentsia once or twice a year. (*Please turn to page 69*)

THE CLUE OF THE JUMPING BEAN

In response to Mystery readers' demands for the return of their favorite authors, the editors present this thrilling new detective series by William Corcoran, creator of "Mark Harrell, the Taxi Detective." Mr. Corcoran is one of America's youngest and most successful authors, and these new, dramatic stories in which Max Bradley, the handsome super-sleuth plays the leading role, represent Mr. Corcoran at his best. We announce —MAX BRADLEY, dashing, two-fisted, Special Agent of the Department of Justice, in his fights against crime.

By WILLIAM CORCORAN

WE had driven through night and through dawn. I had the wheel, and Max Bradley dozed beside me. The pace was terrific, for we rode, so to speak, with Death. The car was a Dusenberg, and a number of times the needle touched one hundred miles per hour.

It was about ten A. M. when we were arrested. This misadventure was for me at the time a wholly unaccountable proceeding, with sinister overtones. But Max Bradley's highly eccentric way of handling emergencies has always been beyond predictability.

As we crossed the line into Culver County, West Virginia, the Shenandoah range lay remote and mysterious behind us and to the south, and the country was broken and irregular but lovely in the morning with the green of Spring. Elsewhere many of the little valleys were marred by a sprawl of drab bituminous workings and impoverished miners' settlements, but right here the scenery was unblemished. On the outskirts of the little rural town of Gentry, the end of our journey, we ran into a rough stretch of highway undergoing repair. I slowed, of course, and Max roused as we bumped over a washboard of unsettled rubble.

"Welcome to Gentry!" he murmured sardonically. "It's a good thing you didn't hit this last night at your customary mad speed, Tommy Torrence." Then, in a changing tone, "Well, well—what can this be?"

It was a police officer of some sort; he came out of concealment among the bushes alongside the highway at a bound, capering threateningly, commanding us to halt.

"These country slickers!" Max sighed. "A perfect speed trap, all right, and they're not letting it go to waste. Pull up. I'll handle him."

Now I had seen Max work magic on the three suddenly deferential motorcycle officers who had chanced to overtake us during the night. Max, as a "G" man—Special Agent, Division of Investigation, Department of Justice—was as impressive a person to cop as to criminal. Lean and military, tanned, gray-eyed, casually urbane in expensive English cut suits, Max had the command of others that comes of thirty-seven years of crowded living and much leadership of lesser man. An extraordinary person, Max Bradley: trained in law, he was soldier, adventurer, gentleman, and a suave and expert detective.

Last night Washington had summoned him from New York by long distance to look into a certain matter of homicide in a hill country section of West Virginia. Murders are ordinarily outside the Federal jurisdiction, but this was no common murder; powerful names and countless millions and even, perhaps, international amity were at stake. Without a qualm Max had commandeered my car and myself for the swift journey. We were of old acquaintance, and my ample means and considerable leisure were generally at his disposal.

The officer, probably a town constable, was a heavy, hulking fellow with small eyes and beefy nose and lips. He put a foot on the running board and roared into my ear. His grievance, with oaths, was—reckless driving.

I laughed; I could not help it. It was Max who politely demurred. The officer cursed him. Max protested, still poisonously calm and reasonable. I knew the tone, yet I was taken by surprise when Max, instead of identifying himself and reducing the man to sudden silence, said abruptly in a tone of freezing command, "Will you be so kind as to remove your hand from that door!"

The officer glared. "Who the hell do you think you're talking to? You're not in New York, now, by Judas!" he added. "You're drunk!"

"Possibly. Possibly we both are. But you're in uniform. I'm not!"

"The two of you are drunk!" bellowed the constable. "Get away from that wheel. I'm taking you in."

And so we were taken in. Max did not object further; he looked dryly philosophic, even anticipative. I had nothing to say, either way.

We were led into a small frame office on the main street of Gentry. The window lettering proclaimed this the court of Joel Loveland, Justice of the Peace. He proved to be a thin, gangling, dyspeptic individual, black and thin of hair and dry of eye. He had an early visitor, a large, powerful, swarthy man of forty or so who lounged beside the desk with a lowering, truculent air of privilege and power. His eyes were bright, yet looked dead, like shoe buttons. This, I learned in time, was John Skyras, bullying, ambitious, the ruthless boss of the town and sinister contestant for the political power of the county.

Max muttered, "Watch my play. Back me if necessary." So I let him step up to the desk to face the music. He stood there, scrutinizing in calm absorption the two men, while the officer related our wrongdoing to the court.

"I spied them coming down the long grade from Pine Ridge. I timed them, and I calculate they were doing sixty. They were proceeding in a very reckless manner. I suspect they are under the influence of intoxicating liquor. They tried to resist arrest and I had to use force to bring them here."

"Sixty," repeated Judge Loveland with relish. "Drunk and resisting an officer. Go on."

Max drawled, "The man's blind or a liar."

Loveland looked at him. "You'll keep your mouth shut until you're told to talk!"

"Or else a fool," Max went on. "We were doing eighty-seven on the grade."

Loveland sat stiff, his face dark with anger. Skyras stared with an evil gleam in his Buddha-like gaze; occasionally he reached in a pocket and cracked a small nut between his fingers, tossing the kernel in his mouth and dropping the tiny shells. I had learned from Max to observe hands; these had blunt, powerful, cruel fingers, with dark heavy nails bitten or broken down to the quick. He grunted and said in a rasping tone with alien accent, "Eighty-seven is more better, bet you my life! Let him have it, Joel. He's asking for it, sure."

The judge obeyed. "Eighty-seven, eh? Well, I'm mighty glad to learn. I'm going to fine you a dollar for every mile. You'll settle up or go to jail!"

Max shrugged. "You can't fine me. I wasn't driving the car."

Judge Loveland looked nonplussed, then he fixed his vindictive gaze on me. The diversion quite suited Max's purpose.

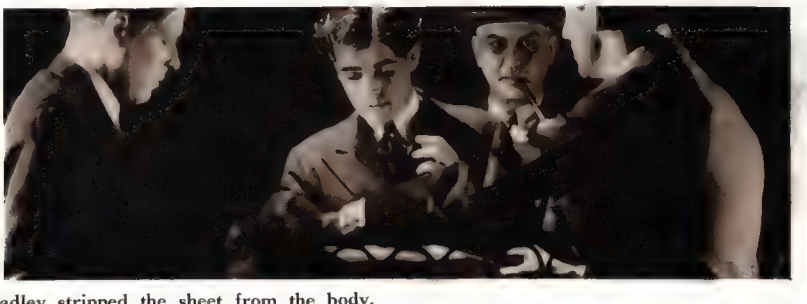
Smoothly, deftly, Max reached for the .45 Army automatic he carried always in a shoulder holster, and quietly, but so very convincingly he urged, "Be very still for a moment, please—all of you!"

He had them cornered, speechless, impotent. He smiled, in a peculiar, dangerous way. I waited for him to deliver a scathing lecture and disclose who he was. Instead he strolled up to the officer, who stood dumbstruck, plucked the revolver from his side holster and tossed it through an open window.

"This shakedown is too baldfaced to go any further," he drawled. "I was curious to see how far you'd go, but this ceases to be amusing. It's too damned stupid!"

Max removed a revolver he found in Skyras' hip pocket. The big man stood fast by his chair, his face gorged with rage. Max found another gun in the judge's desk. He threw both weapons out. The judge cowered in his chair, his complexion the color of mud.

"Now then," said Max, "we'll reverse this. How



Bradley stripped the sheet from the body. "Mackinson—is this the body of your wife?"

Tower Studios

I peered over Bradley's shoulder—and beheld Mrs. Clapper inside the dead woman's bedroom.

much have you collected lately, Judge? Where do you keep it? In the drawer?"

Max opened the drawer immediately before the justice, who choked and said nothing. It was a loose, thick wad of bills that Max thrust into a coat pocket—five hundred dollars it proved to be. Max's interest was taken by something else in the drawer. He picked up half a dozen small brown nuts, tossed them back; picked up a sheet of paper on which a crude circle had been drawn with a pencil, frowned and replaced it. Then he smiled slightly, kicked a chair up to a corner of the desk and sat down.

"Get out your gun and cover them, Tommy," he commanded.

I obeyed. Max put down the automatic and wrote several lines on a blank sheet of paper.

"You'll sign that, please," he said crisply, offering the paper to Loveland.

The judge took the paper, rattled it, protested vehemently.

Max repeated sweetly, viciously, "You'll sign it, please!"

"It's worthless! I'll sign under duress, but it's worthless."

"Sign it and get it over with," said Max, bored. He stared at Skyras.

Mackinson was dazed, speechless, nerve-racked.

Following Loveland, Skyras and the officer were called on to witness the paper. Skyras read it, glared at Max with glittering venom, and abruptly scrawled a signature. The constable, flushed and sweating, signed without reading.

"This constitutes a lesson on common decency," Max explained. "This document is simply an acknowledgment for value received. My fee is high, so I have to insist on it."

Throatily, as a man might vow deadly personal vengeance, Skyras cursed. "You are not going to get away with this, I bet you my life! I tell you, and you can count on that."

A moment later, at Max's direction, I was out behind the wheel of the Dusenberg, ready for flight. There were few people on the street; none paid any attention when Max walked quickly out of the office. We were speeding and out of sight around a corner in half a second.

Then I said explosively, "For God's sake, man!"

Max laughed. He had enjoyed himself. "We'll mail the cash anonymously to the county hospital. That gang of clumsy highbinders? It was impossible to resist."

"But they'll have us picked up, with the Indian sign on us!"

"Keep going and keep cool. We're bound for Cedar Hill, and the hill lies a mile beyond the town. We'll be safe and out of sight."

He was right. In a moment we gained the imposing entrance to the manorial estate called Cedar Hill, a property of the magic Mackinsons who had reared an empire of Steel (*Please turn to page* 50)

By
KATHERINE
KAREY

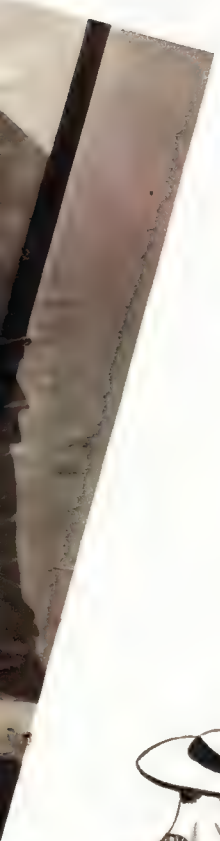
Above, left to right: BINNIE BARNES, Universal star, to appear next month in "Diamond Jim," sports this monotone stripe shirtwaist dress of Tropical silk. It's made for action, has plenty of pockets, youthful raglan sleeves and collar. Won't shrink or fade, is grand for city or country. Binnie likes this type of outfit, for she picked a second one, *also above*. This one is almost better than her first choice, because it has a two-piece effect that's really a peplum, and for plumper gals it's very flattering. This dress is washable, non-shrinkable, Tropical silk, too, and has an action tailored back and skirt, two pockets and golf-length sleeves. Another dress that can go almost anywhere. *Seated,* is her choice for evening, a mousseline de soie with a tux-cut jacket, oo-la-la sleeves and a big flower of the same material. And her next new dress is of cotton net with trick pleating, shirred pockets and a piqué flower.

Opposite page, left to right: DOROTHY MACKAILL wears this simple printed chiffon afternoon dress with the new waistline gathering, reminiscent of the Princess era. Note the high cowl neckline, pretty on anyone, and the softly draped, cape-like sleeves. And then she picks a washable pastel that will walk away with the town. Its collar has contrasting stripes and the belted jacket has flared, elbow-length sleeves. Her next selection is another print for afternoon. It clings snugly at the hipline and concentrates attention on the wide banded sleeves. Try her tailored satin on your best beau. It's simple enough for any hour, but manages to give you a nice, dressed-up feeling.

TOWER STAR

Fashions

Try the stars' wardrobes and you'll get your man with a fine flourish—on a small budget



OUT ON HIS FEET

A Short Romantic Thriller by NORMAN MATSON

Tower Studios

All Chris wanted to do was state a fact, give Beth one plain word instead of the horror of silence.

WHEN Christopher Coghlan woke up that morning he did not open his eyes. He lay there in his own darkness. He did not have a headache.

Coghlan wondered: "Am I in New York? What time—what day is it?"

Once, that time after winning acquittal for Bill Jim Ewen, he had started a party that had gone away as last night's party had gone away and when he woke up he was in Detroit bound for church. Another time—well, no point in piling up the detail.

Coghlan, enormously successful, six feet two and handsome, too handsome with black hair and blue eyes, but his big careless laugh saved him—blarneyed by nature, full of luck, striding the world, scattering his money but earning more and more of it—Coghlan drank like three men when he got started, sometimes kept at it for days. Big men can take it: they have more room, for one thing. Coghlan had never staggered in his life. Long range drinking only made his eyes brighter, his glance swifter—suggestion of fever—he laughed a bit more; that was all. Nothing happened to him except this business of drawing a blank occasionally. But they were pretty serious. They were very blank blanks. That Detroit experience for example—for the life of him he couldn't find the shred of a memory about the trip out there. In his pockets he found cards of people whose names meant not a thing to him, theater ticket stubs, other odds and ends, but none succeeded in unlocking his memory. Weeks later he received letters brimming with gratitude from a deserving fellow he had apparently lavishly aided. One good thing about it was that Coghlan seemed to turn fairly angelic, rather than the reverse, when he took too much.

So last night he had gone to the Osbornes, prepared for a lousy time. He didn't like Osborne, who was rich and idle, an evil man. Why had he gone? Because Beth Harriman was going. And so he hadn't, they hadn't, had a lousy time. Far from it. They'd had a glorious time. He'd made an extemporaneous speech to a champagne glass that he pretended was a microphone, answering all the big-mouthed heroes at once—in a speech designed to end all speeches. Lord, how they'd laughed. All but Osborne. Osborne was in love with Beth Harriman now. Doctor George Searles Fulton had made a sneering jest about that. There was another evil one—Fulton, that sadist! What a crowd they were, come to think about it—"society people." Bores or crooks, filled with envy and hatred.

It was refreshing to think of Beth Harriman. She was a very tall woman, crowned with great rolls of bronze hair. She had a deep voice—large hands—white and graceful though. She was a queen, all right—a woman of powerful will, her manner direct. She had told Chris Coghlan how she felt—and that was ambrosia for his ego—it scared him, too. "Chris," she had said, "I love you with all I've got—with my heart and my flesh and every thought. It's insanity. All night in my dreams; all day in my thoughts. I need your franchise to eat, to exist, to laugh, to cry. I go around like a sleep walker. The time you touched my hand first, that night I kissed my own hand. I slept with it under my cheek because that way I almost touched you. I tried to remember what the word pride, the word shame means; I've lost 'em, so what?" So he kissed her and thought she was marvelous—and decided to remain a bachelor—free, his own boss. He wouldn't be if he married her.

Here Chris Coghlan opened his eyes. Yes, he was in his own bed, an enormous bed it was; and he was in it by himself, and all the spacious, panelled room was as it should be. . . . So he (*Please turn to page* 74)

Photographs by Verne Noll-Tower Studios

Who AM I?

Presented for the first time in any magazine —a thrilling series of his own true adventures —one of the most famous police-detectives of all time writes his first stories exclusively for Mystery Magazine—unknown, untold, thrilling, heart-throbbing stories—told by the man who knows—

By Capt. JOHN H. AYERS

Former Commander of the Missing Persons Bureau of New York

Captain John H. Ayers

"WHO am I?" he asked himself groggily.

Through the haze of a strange sleep from which he slowly awakened, the man in the waiting-room of the vast Pennsylvania Railroad terminal in New York looked about him and saw men and women coming and going, but they were like shadows in a dream, and the place he was in was utterly unfamiliar to him.

"How did I get here?" he wondered.

It was night. The lights were on. A clock's hands pointed to eight-forty. But at what time he sat down on the bench, the man didn't know. Everything was blotted out that had happened prior to this awakening. It was like being born again.

"God!" he muttered. "What does it mean?"

And he looked at his clothes which were fearfully rumpled and soiled, and felt his cheeks which were covered with a growth of stubble.

A porter eyed him threateningly.

"You better git goin', bo!" he said.

The man felt dismayed, lost in a cloud of bewilderment. Attempting to reply to the employe, he discovered that his throat and tongue were like sandpaper. Rising to his feet and walking with difficulty, he went to a drinking fountain. His muscles were stiff and sore, as if he had been in one position for a long time.

People in passing gave him suspicious glances. He looked like a tramp, acted like a drunk, but there was an air of refinement about him, and a certain appealing pathos, too.

As a matter of fact, the man staggered because of great physical shock and hunger, not because of liquor or any drug. After gulping five cups of water—he had never been so thirsty—he sought out the porter who had told him to move on.

"Say," he said, "this is a railroad station, isn't it?"

The porter grinned from ear to ear.

"Golly, that's a good one to ask in the biggest railroad station in the world! What's the idea, bo?"

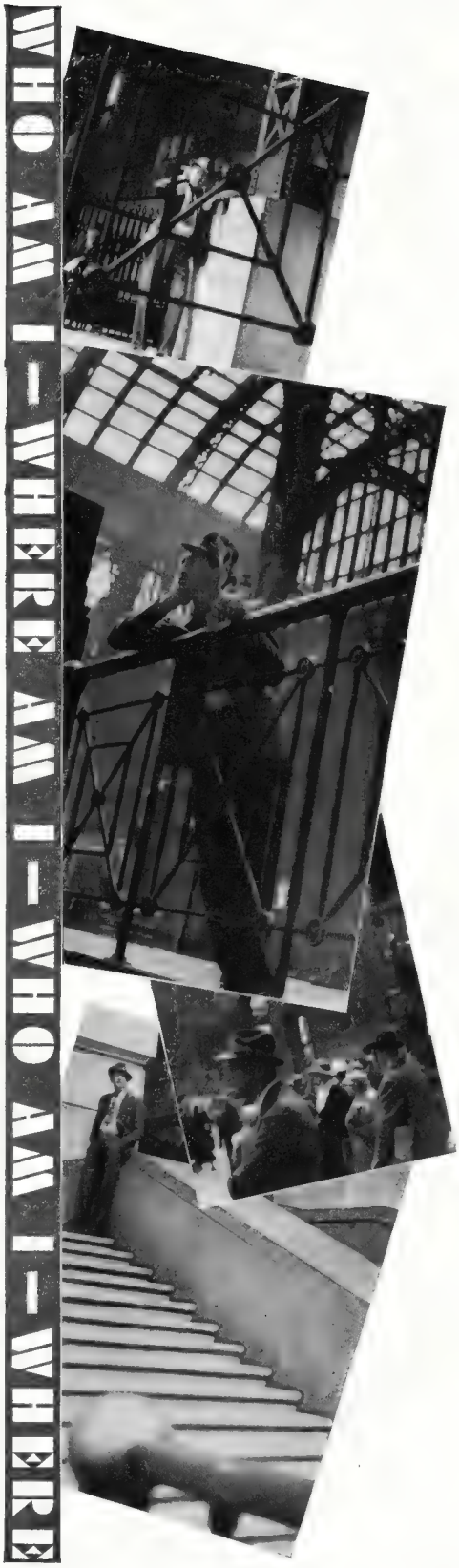
The man didn't see the humor of the situation.

"Please tell me where the restaurant is," he said.

Still chuckling, the porter gave him directions.

"But you better go to the bean-wagon or the Automat," he advised, judging from the man's appearance that he was down to a few cents.

When the stranger entered the railroad restaurant, so bedraggled and unshaven, they evidently felt the same way as the porter. Bums were not in the habit of dining there. However, there was something in this man's manner—and on closer inspection his clothes (*Please turn to page* 84)



THE DOCTOR *and the* LUNATIC

By
RICHARD CONNELL

EARLY that sunny, soundless June morning, old Matthew Kelton came out of his salt-box house to potter for at time in his rose-garden while his cook was crisping the breakfast bacon. Below in the peaceful valley he could see the little white village of Mallow drowsing beside its silver-green strip of river, and he could see looming dimly in the distance the beginnings of the Berkshires; but it was the immediate landscape that interested Matthew Kelton just then, his roses, and particularly one rose. For forty years raising roses had been his hobby, and he had won many blue ribbons; but he had never grown, nor, indeed, ever seen a more magnificent specimen than this perfect and beautiful flower which had come to grace his garden.

"Nature," he told his wife, "has performed a miracle. I worked many years to produce a rose like this but the best I grew fell short of my dreams. Then this one happened—a new variety—happened as mysteriously as the birth of a genius. This is a —well, I should call it a Shakespeare among roses."

He hurried across his garden toward this paragon which was isolated from the common blooms by a wire fence. Behind his glasses his blue eyes beamed with excited pride. Then he stopped abruptly and gave a short, shocked cry. His rose was gone.

It was not gone entirely, though. It had been ripped up by the roots, its stem had been broken into a dozen pieces, and the flower itself had been torn to shreds. The fragments lay inside and all around the crushed wire cage, and they had been trampled and ground into the dirt.

"Martha!" cried Kelton, and there was a sob in his voice. "Martha, come here."

His wife hurried from the house. He could not say anything. He could only point with a trembling finger.

"Oh, Matthew, how awful!" exclaimed his wife. "I'm so sorry. How did it happen?"

"I don't know," said Kelton, and his normally mild face was grim, "but, by the Lord Harry, I'm going to find out."

"Some animal—" she began.

"An animal, yes," he cut in. "An animal, beyond a doubt. An animal that wore boots! Look!"

He waved his hand at the ground around the rose. She saw the imprints, blurred but unmistakable, of soles and heels.

"But who could do so wanton and savage a thing?" said Mrs. Kelton.

"Only a wanton savage," Kelton said.

"An enemy?"

"I can think of no one who hates me," said Matthew Kelton.

She put her arm around his slender shoulders.

"No one could hate you, Matt," she said. "Perhaps this was done by some heedless small boys."

"A man did this, a big man. Look at the size of those footprints," said Kelton.

"Perhaps some passing motorist helped himself to some of our flowers," said Mrs. Kelton. "There was a full moon last night, you know, and it wouldn't have been difficult."

"They could not see this flower from the road," said Kelton, "and there are dozens of bushes much handier. To get to this one rose he had to pass a thousand others. Besides, cars almost never come up this dead-end road at night and when they do I always hear them. I'm a light sleeper; but I heard nothing. No, dear, this was done deliberately in cold fury, and it worries me, worries me terribly."

"I know, Matt," said Martha Kelton, gently. "You loved that rose. But wait! You'll grow another just as perfect."

"Perhaps," said Kelton. "I hardly dare hope to. But it's not the rose I'm bothered about; it's the mind that directed the hands that shattered that rose. It frightens me, Martha—"

"Why?"

"It hardly bears thinking about," said Kelton. "Let's go into the house. I need my coffee this morning."

He had finished his breakfast, and lit his pipe and was distracting himself with the cryptogram in the morning newspaper, when a huge motor-car came panting up the hill and a huge and panting man in riding clothes got out of it and came lumbering up the path to Kelton's vine-grown porch.

"Good-morning, Squire," Kelton greeted the giant.

"Good morning nothing," growled Squire Abernathy. "A bad morning for me. Kelton, I swear if I get my hands on him, I'll show him what real strangling is."

His two big, calloused hands closed on an imaginary throat.

"What's happened?" demanded Kelton, with quick concern.

The Squire's fat face was mottled and creased with rage.

"Tex is dead," he said.

"Tex? I'm distressed to hear that," said Kelton.

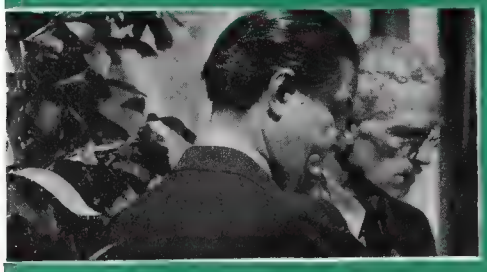
"Murdered!" said the Squire. "Hung by the neck like a common felon."

"Who did it?"

"I don't know—yet."

"Some rival collie breeder, perhaps?" suggested Kelton.

"No," stated Abernathy, emphatically. "No dog-lover would



No one knows when a maniac will strike; but when he does, he leaves an unforgettable mark. Here is the uncanny story of three men, three crimes and the idiot who killed at midnight!

harm so splendid an animal as Defender Tex. Poor Tex—" Abernathy's deep voice broke—"he was the handsomest creature I ever saw, as intelligent as many men and better behaved than most, a real gentleman, and I found him this morning hanging high in that sycamore near his kennel, cold and stiff. A fiend's work that, Kelton!"

"Any clues?"

"None; but I'm convinced the man was no stranger around here."

"Why do you think that?"

"Knew my place well. Dodged the burglar alarms. Moreover, Tex must have known him, or he never could have come near Tex. It's a local man, all right. Oh, yes, Kelton, I came here to ask you to help me find him."

"I'll help," said Matthew Kelton. "Gladly. Now, Squire, you know this section well——"

"Born here. Lived here all my life," said the Squire. "Know every man, woman and child. Oh, yes."

"Can you think of anybody who might conceivably do such a foul deed?" queried Kelton.

"I've squeezed my brain till it's black and blue," said Abernathy, "and I can't think of a soul. Of course, there's that fellow——"

He paused, frowning blackly.

"Go on," urged Kelton.

"Well, I don't feel justified in accusing him of a dirty trick like this," said the Squire, "but that rich crank, General Bannerman, whose place is next to mine, hates me. Claims my dogs killed his pheasants. He's a liar, and so I told him. We threw some bitter words back and forth. He's a queer one, Kelton—and a possibility."

"The General is not overfond of me, either," observed Kelton. "We crossed swords at a town meeting."

"Y'know, Kelton," said the Squire, "I think we may hear from this rascal again."

"We already have," said Kelton. "Come with me, please."

He led Abernathy across the garden and showed him the wreck of the rose. Abernathy whistled; then he swore in no uncertain terms.

"His work!" he said. "I'll bet on that. Cursed tough on you, Kelton. That rose was as wonderful, in its way, as my Tex was in his. Well, what's next? They say things go in threes, you know."

"I'm not superstitious," said Matthew Kelton, with a half smile.

Toward them through the roses came his wife.

"Matt," she said, "I just took a telephone message from General Bannerman. He's coming to see you right away, Matt."

"Did he say why, Martha?"

"Yes," she told him. "It seems that last night somebody broke into his house. Nothing was stolen, but you know that lovely Raphael Madonna he has—"

Kelton nodded.

"Well," she went on, "it was slashed to ribbons."

The two men stared at each other. Mrs. Kelton returned to the house.

"Do you think the General suspects you?" asked Abernathy.

"Maybe he does."

"If he accuses *me*," declared the Squire, "I'll break him in two."

Soon General Bannerman's long English car shot up the hill. The General was an elderly man, very tall, very erect, very stiff. He walked straight up to Squire Abernathy.

"Heard about your dog, Abernathy," he said, gruffly. "Noble animal. Rotten shame. Sorry."

"Thanks, General," returned the Squire. "And I'm sorry about your picture."

They stood eyeing each other awkwardly.

"Same scoundrel did both jobs, I think," said General Bannerman. "It could hardly be a coincidence."

"That's my idea," said Abernathy. "And Kelton is in this, too. Last night his prize rose was ruined."

"Really?" said the General. "That's too bad, Kelton."

He cleared his throat, and there was a tinge of embarrassment in his voice, as he said:

"Look here, gentlemen, we've had our tiffs; but I think we should call a truce in our little war and combine forces against the common enemy. What do you say?"

"My hand on that," boomed the Squire.

"And mine," said Kelton.

"I came to see you, Kelton," said Bannerman, "because I thought you might be willing to help me solve this mystery."

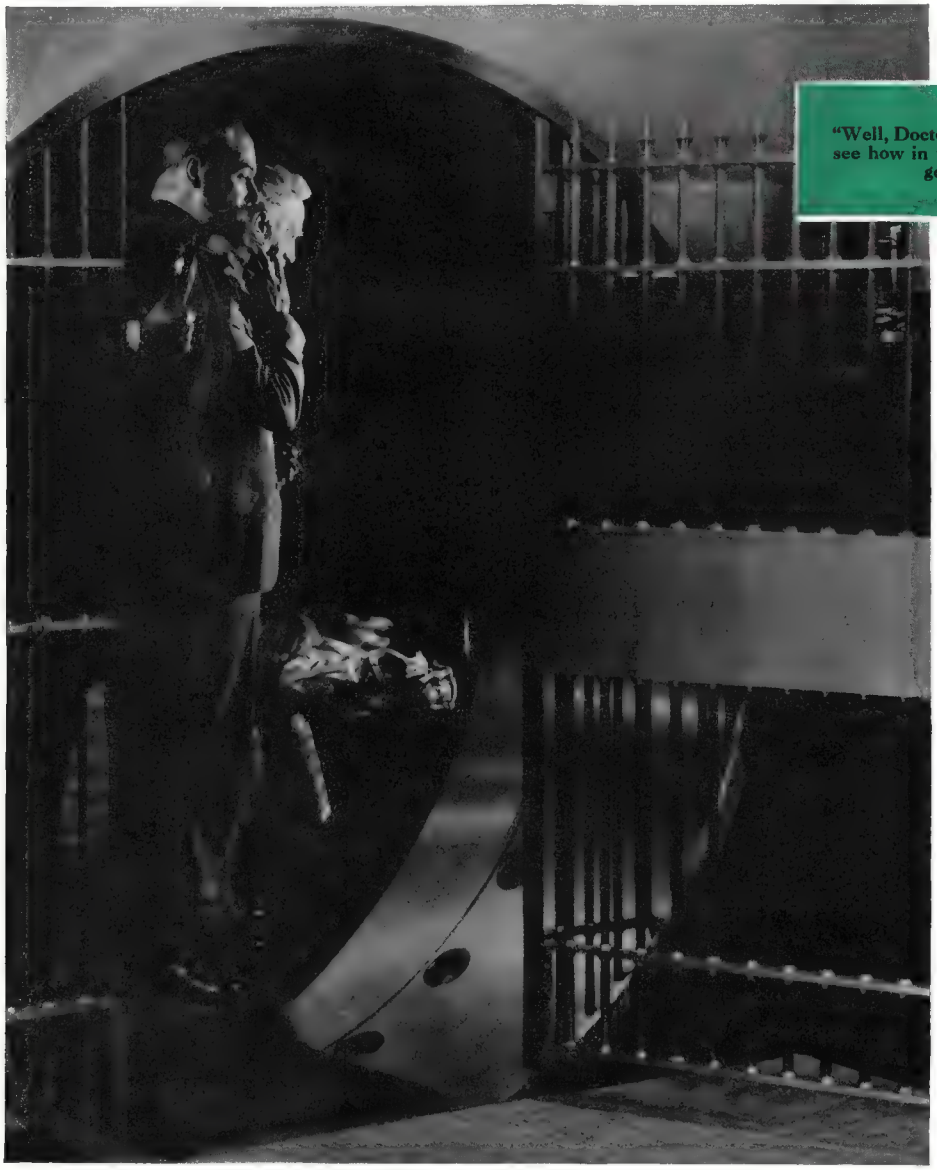
"It's a case for the police, you know," said Matthew Kelton.

"Police be blowed!" ejaculated the General. "Those two scarecrows we call constables couldn't find a bull in a bathroom, and that lazy, drunken slob of a political sheriff couldn't arrest himself. I have notified the police, but we can expect scant help from that quarter. Gentlemen, this is our show. Any suggestions?"

"The obvious one," said Abernathy. "The man's mad."

"Must be," agreed Bannerman. "I see no motive (*Please turn to page* 76)

Tower Studios

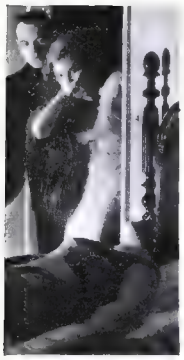


"Well, Doctor," Kelton said finally. "I don't see how in the world a man could possibly get out of this room."

Tiger WOMAN

Enter the detectives in love—Tubman Jones and beautiful Jenny Jennings! A new series of unique detective dramas, starting in this issue, which will thrill and delight you! A crime reporter and a lovely columnist find life one exciting adventure after another, as love and danger lead them along a rocky road to romance!

By EMMA-LINDSAY SQUIER



THE stocky young man in the rumpled tuxedo, and the fair-haired girl in white chiffon, paused outside the door of 214 with its neat little sign, "Dr. William Lyons, House Physician."

Tubman Jones stifled a yawn. His dark eyes were a bit bloodshot and weary. A hard day at the office of the *Evening Gazette*, where he was a "crime man," followed by a dance on the roof garden of the Hotel Baumont, made him averse to accepting the invitation of the garrulous, dapper doctor, to "run down and have a good-night highball."

"Why d'you want to bother with that old woman?" he grumbled.

Jenny Jennings dimpled up at him. No one could have looked less the hard-boiled newspaper woman. With her blue eyes and golden hair, she had a deceptive Dresden china air of fragility . . . until one noticed the strong, decisive chin. Then one remembered that her father was Dr. Paul Jennings, the famous criminologist, and that Jenny had helped him in some of his most difficult cases.

"For the Gadabout column, stupid," she whispered. "He loves to tell me everything he knows . . . makes him feel like a collaborator."

Her knuckles beat a light tattoo on the polished panels of the door.

It was long after midnight, and the carpeted corridor was a buff-colored tunnel of discretly lighted silence.

The door opened eagerly, and Dr. Lyons made hospitable burbling noises as he ushered them into the luxurious room, disposed of their wraps on the cushioned davenport, and began rather breathily the business of mixing drinks.

"I promised you an item, Miss Jennings," he beamed, his pale eyes blinking from behind neatly rimmed spectacles. "Of course, what I have to tell you won't interest Mr. Jones . . ." he smiled toothily at the chunky young man, "because it has nothing to do with crime. But it may interest *you*, Miss Jennings . . . yes, I'm sure it will. You know of course that Lita Bernard, the famous actress, lives here at the Baumont. . . ."

Tubman Jones accepted a tall, frosted glass somewhat morosely, and settled himself in a deep chair on the small of his back, to the further disadvantage of his already mussed tuxedo. One of the toughest things about being in love with a girl like Jenny . . . aside from a year of pretense that he was just being a platonic big brother . . . was to see the way other men looked at her. He suspected that Dr. Lyons wasn't nearly as interested in the Gadabout column as in its golden-haired editor.

Jenny smiled appropriately, and touched her glass to that of Doctor Lyons.

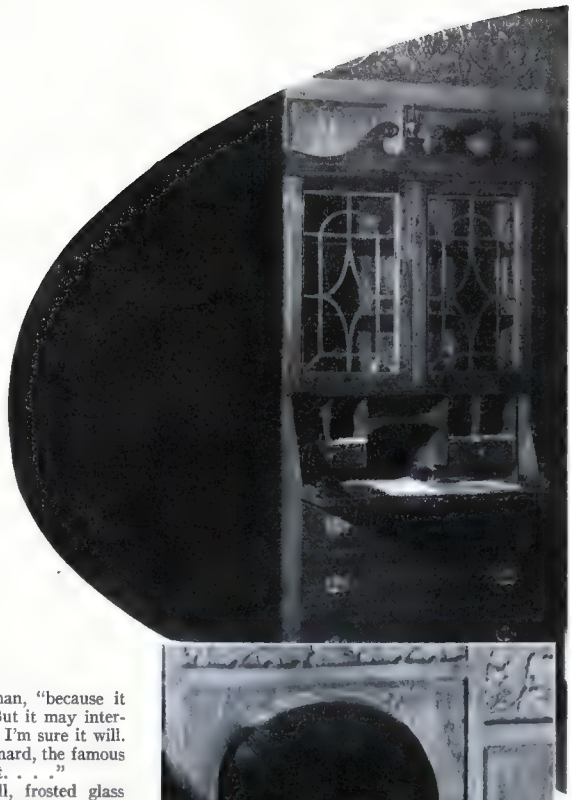
"Yes, I knew that. And her leading man, Raoul Demarest, lives here too, doesn't he?" Her blue eyes sharpened suddenly, giving an effect of brittle lights turned on in a rose-tinted boudoir. "You aren't going to tell me that they're married . . . at last? Oh, what a swell story that would be—"

"No, no, no," he denied hastily, putting up a hand slightly pudgy and womanish. "It's quite the reverse, as a matter of fact. They've quarreled, and he's leaving her company. Her French maid came running for a sedative . . . Miss Bernard was in hysterics. Really, she made quite a scene. You know how actresses are. . . ."

Jenny nodded, a trifle absently. Tubby had the feeling that Dr. Lyons' proffered item was distasteful to her. But she said brightly, "Oh, don't I! I went to interview Miss Bernard once in her dressing-room, and the hysterics were rolling all around the place, like the thunder in Alice in Wonderland. She and Raoul had had a quarrel *that* day. He came out of her dressing-room like a blond raging lion, shouting that he was going to leave the company for good . . . but of course he didn't."

The dapper, somewhat paunchy house physician looked a trifle crestfallen.

"But really, I do think this quarrel was about something special, I really do. It was her maid who told me. . . . It seems that Miss Bernard and Raoul Demarest had had a terrific quarrel, and that finally . . . he threatened violence. I



As they came into the room, they were conscious of clutter and great disorder.

The cruel bruises on her throat were deepening into ugly circles. In the bathroom a woman screamed, "Let me out! Let me out!"

Tower Studios, Courtesy Fifth Avenue Hotel

From down the hall came the high, thin sound of a woman's scream.

gathered that the maid was really afraid for her mistress's life."

Jenny's eyes were alert once more.

"What was the row about?"

Doctor Lyons shook his head sadly.

"Really, I couldn't make it out. You know what an accent the woman has, and she was most incoherent. I called on Miss Bernard of course, and found her in tears. I administered a sedative, and I hope some slight comfort in the way of advice. But really, I do think this must have been more than just a lovers' quarrel. . . ."

Tubby squirmed uncomfortably. The jaunty doctor's repetitions were getting on his nerves.

"I'll talk to Miss Bernard or Mr. Demarest tomorrow," Jenny promised, "and see if he's really going to leave her company. That *would* be news! You know how devoted he has been . . . everyone has expected their marriage for at least two years. . . ."

She rose, and Tubby heaved himself upward with a sigh of thanksgiving. He picked up Jenny's gold-threaded lamé jacket from the davenport, and held it for her.

"And thanks a lot, Doctor, for tipping me off."

A dimple appeared at the corner of her delicately tinted lips. "It's nice to know that you approve of my work, even if you do think my dad's methods are unethical."

A flush spread over Doctor Lyons' pinkish features. "Now, now," he countered uncomfortably, "that's hardly fair, is it? Naturally, as a man of medicine, I distrust metaphysics and far fetched ideas concerning hypnosis and the like. . . ."

She laughed outright, and Tubby felt a little jerk in the neighborhood of his heart. Jenny's laughter was like the rest of her; wholesome, delightful. He opened the hall door.

"Oh, that's all right. Dad doesn't expect to be agreed with. In fact, I think he thrives on opposition. But you will admit that he does get results. . . ."

Her voice broke off abruptly. From far down the corridor with its muted lights and somberly elegant paneling, there came the high, thin sound of a woman's scream. Again and again it came, rising to a crescendo of terror and agony. For an instant, the three in the warm, luxurious room stared at each other with tingling breathlessness. Then Tubby yanked the door fully open, and went loping down the hall toward the end of the corridor.

Jenny flung the gold threaded jacket back on the davenport, picked up her chiffon skirts in both hands, and raced after him, her silver evening slippers twinkling on the buff carpet like stars playing tiddledy winks.

Doctor Lyons dashed into the adjoining office, switched on the lights, and fumbled for his black bag. Then belatedly, he panted and puffed in the wake of the other two, tossing breathy, soothing words to opening doors and startled, disheveled heads.

"No, no, nothing really . . . just a nightmare . . . a lady who is very nervous. . . ."

He knew it was Lita Bernard.

THE screams had ceased. But by the time Dr. Lyons arrived at the transversing corridor where a short right-angled hallway opened into a suite of rooms, a hollow pounding was audible, fierce and irregular, like an African drum, inexpertly played. And a muffled voice could be heard calling, "Help! Help! Let me out!"

"In here, Doc," Tubby indicated "280." He already had the door open. (*Please turn to page* 60)

The DUCHESS SPOTS a KILLER

Pinky Kane, Spike Kaylor and the beautiful Katie Blayne join forces to trap a master criminal, with results that are highly disturbing to one reporter's heart and a killer's perfect alibi

By WHITMAN CHAMBERS

AS I walked into the City Hall press room that afternoon Spike Kaylor had evidently just hit the ceiling and come down with feet spread, fists clenched and eyes shooting fire.

"All right, you lugs!" he bellowed, glaring around the room. "Who took it?"

Willie Blake of the *Sentinel*, Pete Zerker, who works for the *Bulletin*, and Slim Lonergan went on with their card game. Katie Blayne, blond and slim and lovely, who covers day police for the *Sun*, proceeded calmly with the business of making up her lips.

Spike aimed a kick at the waste basket. "If this is an act," he roared, "you yokels can ring down the lousy curtain! . . . Who took it?"

Everybody remained very busy.

I said mildly to my co-worker on the *Telegram*: "Who took what?"

"Why, my new overcoat," he indignantly replied. "I leave it hanging there on a hook by the washbowl. I run up to the mayor's office for a chat. I come back and it's gone."

Well, there was something queer about it. This was October in California. Overcoats, for such hardy souls as Spike Kaylor, were still in mothballs. And as for a new overcoat—Spike's salary, by his own confession, was more than a week overdrawn.

"Come on, you muggs!" Spike stormed. "Kick in! Where's my overcoat?"

Pete Zerker, his long face singularly like that of a tired truck horse, looked up from his cards. "This, Mr. Kaylor, is a press room," he pointed out. "The checking concession has not yet been farmed out. Until it is, are we to be responsible for such miscellaneous articles of wearing apparel as you choose——"

"Oh, skip it! Who was in here while I was upstairs?"

Willie pursed his lips. "Let me see——"

"Duchess!" Spike snapped.

Katie closed her compact and looked up, smiling. "Yes—darling!"

"Who was in here during the half hour I was talking to the mayor?"

"Why, at least a dozen people dropped in, Spike," she replied, and then added, "mostly cops."

"That's a lot of help," Spike groaned.

I said, "Look here, guy. If the question isn't out of order, may I ask where you got a new overcoat?"

Spike looked vaguely foolish. "What in Sam Hill has that got to do with it?"

"Your young cohort," Pete Zerker told me, "has been indulging his well-known predilection for crap shooting."

"Spike," said Willie Blake, "was down in the bull pen this morning shooting crap with the city's guests."

"Yes," said the Duchess brightly, "Spike won a beautiful camel's hair overcoat from——"

"Of all people," Pete Zerker said indignantly.

"A burglar," Katie finished.

Spike flushed, growling: "There's no law against it, is there?"

"There are plenty of laws against it," I said. "but don't worry about them. Who is this burglar you won the coat from?"

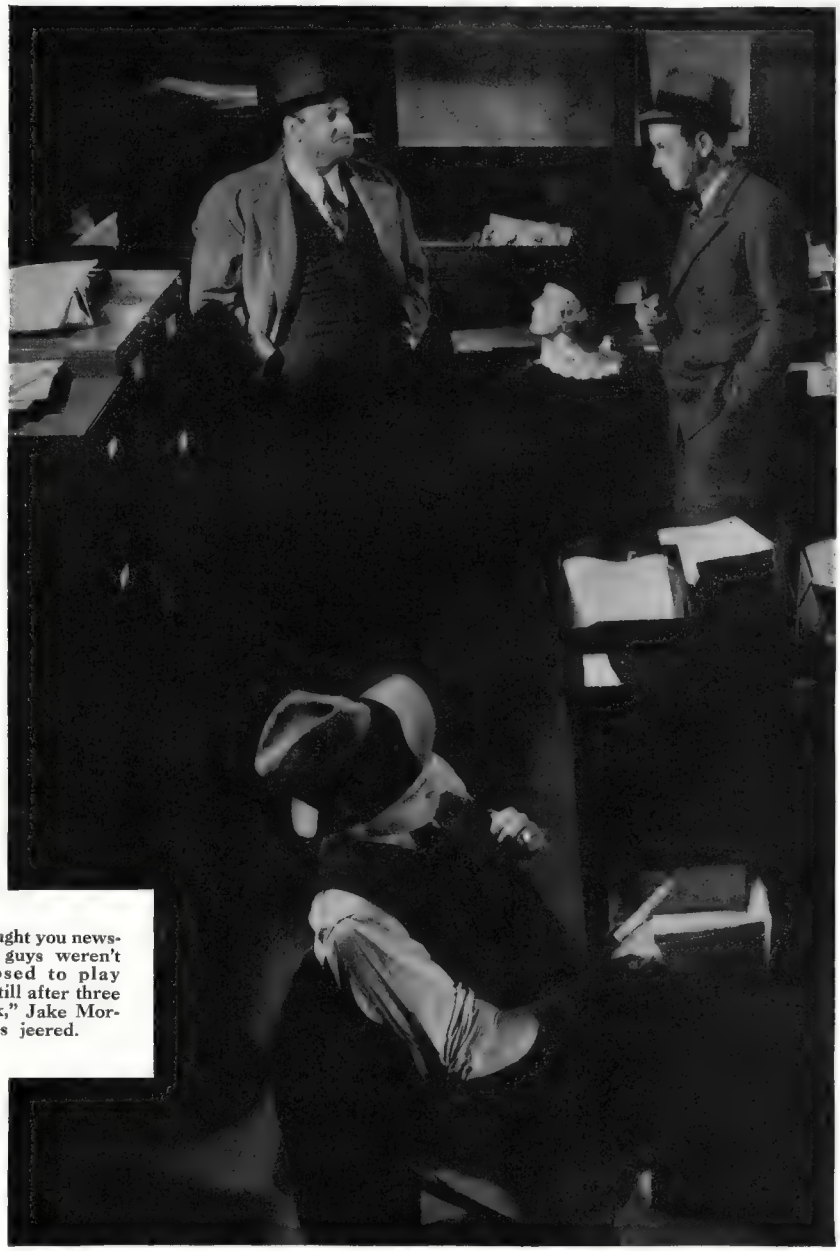
"A punk by the name of Dopey McClain. Held in five grand bail for a job in Leona Heights."

"And where is Dopey McClain now?"

"Last I saw of him he was back in his cell. The turnkey caught us just after I'd won the overcoat and locked the whole gang up again." Spike grinned reminiscently. "Almost locked me up, too."

"We," said Willie Blake, "would have been saved a lot of grief if he had."

"Spike, you poor sap!" I said. "Hasn't it penetrated your thick cranium that this guy has made



"I thought you newspaper guys weren't supposed to play cards till after three o'clock," Jake Morris jeered.

bail and walked calmly in here and reclaimed his coat?"

"What guy has made bail, huh?"

We all turned and there stood big Jake Morris, who had slipped into the room without, as usual, a sound. Jake looks like he was raised in a dark cellar. He is as offensive as one of those gray bugs you find when you turn over a board. But Jake was one of our crosses. He wrote bail bonds and we had to tolerate him. A bail bond broker can break more news than six chiefs of police.

"Here," I said, "is the so-and-so in the woodpile."

"I ain't been in no woodpile," Jake said virtuously, "and I ain't no so-and-so. What guy were you talkin' about made bail, huh?"

"A guy by the name of Dopey McClain. How about it, Jake?"

"Sure. I wrote his bond," answered Jake.

"When?" Spike demanded.

Jake looked up at the clock; it was eight minutes of three. "If I remember correct, Dopey was released at two-forty. I think that's what it says on the blotter."

Spike gasped. "That damned punk must have just slipped by me in the hall. All right, Jake. Where is he?"

"Should I know where he is?"

"Now don't be funny. You're not going to write a five-grand bond on a burglar and then turn him loose to skip on you. Where you got him stowed away?"

Jake grinned and turned out his coat pockets. "I swear it, Spike. I ain't got the faintest idea where he is."

Spike groaned and sat down, wiping the perspiration off his face with a soiled handkerchief. "A swell bunch of pals you turned out to be," he said bitterly.

Jake chuckled; he sounded as though he were trying to cough a fish bone out of his throat. He looked at the card players. "I thought you newspaper guys weren't supposed to play cards till after three o'clock," he jeered.

"What's three o'clock got to do with it?" I asked.

Pete Zerker looked up. "You haven't heard the Chief's latest, Pinky. Newspaper men assigned to the City Hall will refrain from playing cards in the press room until after three o'clock. We're breaking rules for the fun of it."

"The hell you say! What's the bright idea?"

All eyes turned to Katie.

"Well, Duchess?" I said.

"It was the Lady's suggestion, Pinky."

She referred to Miss Jane Tobin, the hell-roaring, two-fisted city editor of the *Sun*. It was Miss Tobin who, a few months before, had sent Katie Blayne over to cover police. And it was Katie Blayne who, serene and beautiful and disgustingly competent, had not only seriously cramped our style but had put over a number of important news beats on us.

"I see," I replied heavily. "Miss Tobin, besides running the *Sun* these days, is now trying to take the directorship of the press room."

"That's about it, Pinky," the Duchess nodded, smiling.

"I ask again, what's the bright idea?"

"Card games draw so many bums." She looked straight at big Jake Morris. "And bums, hanging around all the time, interfere with my work."

Jake bristled. "I like that. A bum, huh? I'm a bum, huh?"

"Sing it, Jake," Katie said pleasantly.

Jake gurgled.

"All right, Duchess," I said. "Have it your way. You and the Lady keep on. You'll lead with your right once too often."

"And then?"

"We'll hang one on you," I said viciously, "that'll put you to sleep for a week."

Pete Zerker said, "It seems to me, Pinky, that you and Spike have been making that threat for a long time."

"Go fry your mush, Pete!" I snapped. And to Jake! "Come on, Jake, deal 'em."

"Okay."

I jerked over a chair and sat down. Jake set a flask of whiskey on the desk and picked up a deck of cards.

The others went back to their card game. Jake and I sat down to a two-handed game of pinochle. Katie went out, conjured a story from some one, and phoned it to her office on her private line. Spike Kaylor sulked in a corner, occasionally passing a remark about his pals who had let a burglar walk into the room and steal his overcoat.

It was all pretty dull. Cordially disliking Jake Morris, bored by the rest, I didn't get much kick out of the game. It was four o'clock and I'd about decided to call it off and go to a movie—I wasn't due to take over the beat from Spike until six—when we got the flash.

Slim Jenkins, one of the dicks on the pawn shop detail, poked his head into the room.

"Hey, you guys! Want a swell murder?"

Did we want a swell murder!

"Al Rosenblatt. You know, the diamond importer. Office in the McDonald Building. They just found him. Brains scattered all over the floor. Safe open and cleaned. Thought you'd like to know."

Would we like to know!

We went out of there like a string of apparatus on a three-alarm fire. And left big Jake calling, "Hey! You owe me four bits. Hey, Pink!"

Spike and I, Willie and Zerker shot across the street and down the block to the McDonald Building, an ancient three-story structure which had somehow been overlooked when progress marched across the downtown district. As we were clattering up the stairs I realized all at once that Katie was right on our heels.

I stopped, swung around, blocked her path.

"Look, kid! You don't want to see this. It'll be a mess. Why drag along? You haven't an edition for a couple of hours. Go back to the hall and get the story from the dicks."

"Pinky, Pinky," she said sadly, breathlessly. "Do you really think I'm too soft to look at a dead man?"

"You're not soft, Katie. You can take 'em as they come. But why go out of your way to look at a thing like this?"

"Because I want all the details for my paper. And I can't count on anybody to give them to me."

Well, she'd been fighting us for a long time, a lone girl against four men. I wondered if she wasn't getting a bit tired of carrying the ball for the *Sun*.

"You can count on me, kid," I told her. "I'll give you all the dope. I'm not officially on the job till six, you know, and Spike Kaylor will have to——"

"Thanks, Pinky," she interrupted. Her blue eyes were steady as they met mine, and her voice was cool. "I'll go upstairs now, please. If you'll stand aside."

"Oh. So you don't trust me."

Tower Studios

"Duchess, you stay here. This may get rough."

"Not even a little bit, Pinky," she said quietly.
"All right, Duchess. To hell with you!"
I ran on up the stairs, boiling.

AL ROSENBLATT, the diamond merchant, had a single room on the third floor, one of the few offices now occupied in this ramshackle building. Bodie Wallis, Captain of Detectives, and Pete Moran, head of the homicide detail, were in charge and a harness bull stood on guard at the door.

We all flashed our press cards and went in. The room was large and was furnished with a desk, several chairs, a big square table in the center and an old-fashioned safe in the far corner. The door of the safe was open and, between it and the table, was the body of Al Rosenblatt.

The diamond merchant lay on his back, one leg drawn under him, both arms raised as though he had been shielding his head when he fell. His dull eyes, wide with the terror which had gripped him, stared up at the ceiling. His bald head was a bloody mess. The top of the skull had been caved in with a jack handle which, wrapped with a blood-stained rag, lay beside the body.

"Like it, Duchess?" I asked Katie in an undertone.

"Love it." Her whisper was resolute, but her face was dead white and she held her lips tight to keep them from trembling. Captain Wallis was questioning a slight, middle-aged man who stood by the table mopping his gray-green face.

"Have you touched anything, Mr. Rosenblatt?"

The sweating man said: "Not a thing except the telephone, Captain. As soon as I forced the lock and got in I called police headquarters. I didn't even touch my—the body. I knew my father was dead."

"Now let's go over this again. You say it's your custom to call for your father every afternoon at three-thirty?"

"Yes, sir. He wasn't well and kept short office hours. He had no car of his own and didn't care for taxis, so I made a point of calling for him and taking him home."

"And today you came and found the door locked and got no answer when you knocked."

"Yes."

"You suspected something was wrong and broke the lock." Captain Wallis looked at the door and back again at the little man, skeptically.

"Yes. The lock gave quite easily. The building is old, you know."

"Yes, I know." Wallis looked down at the dead man. "Was your father in the habit of keeping any great number of diamonds in that old safe?"

"No. He kept his diamonds in a safety deposit vault. But when he expected a customer he went out and got them and put them in the safe. He never left any gems there overnight."

Captain Wallis nodded and strolled to the desk, while Rosenblatt folded limply into a chair. The captain, with something of the air of a pouncing cat, picked up a memorandum pad. He read:

"Frank Leopold. Three p. m. Two-three carat." He looked over his shoulder at Rosenblatt. "Did your father do business with Frank Leopold?" Leopold is one of the city's leading jewelers.

"No. Not for two years. They had an argument over some stones."

Wallis grunted. "Then how come, do you suppose, Frank Leopold made an appointment with your father for 3 p. m. to look at some two- and three-carat diamonds?"

"I can't understand that, Captain. I didn't think Leopold would ever do business with my father again."

Pete Moran, who had been kneeling beside the body, jumped up excitedly. He held out a watch, exclaimed: "Look, Captain! Stopped at 3:01."

Wallis took the watch, turned it over in his palm, nodded thoughtfully.

"Get it?" Moran asked, bubbling with eagerness.

"I think so." The Captain laid the watch on the table and stood for a moment surveying the scene. "It was like this. Some one came here to look at diamonds. Rosenblatt opened his safe and when he turned from it he was tapped on the head. He fell forward, as a man does when he's knocked cold. In falling he hit the corner of the table with his chest. That caved in the back of his watch and stopped it."

"Have it your own way, Duchess," I said, "but you and the Lady will lead with the right once too often."

"And fixed the time of the killing," Moran put in, hurriedly, "at exactly 3:01."

"Yes. And in striking the corner of the table that way, Rosenblatt spun around so that he fell on his back. The killer proceeded to finish him where he lay, rifle the safe, set the catch on the door and lam out of here."

Captain Wallis paused and looked sharply at the little man in the chair. He asked, very casually:

"Where, Mr. Rosenblatt, were you at three o'clock this afternoon?"

Rosenblatt gulped. His jaw dropped and he stared blankly at Wallis for a moment. "Why I—I was in my office. I'm an attorney, you know."

The Captain's voice was a bit sharper. "Yes, I know that. Who was with you in your office from, say, two-thirty until you came up here at three-thirty? . . . Come, come! Who was with you there? Anybody?"

"Y-y-es. Certainly." Rosenblatt got hold of himself. "From two-thirty to three-thirty I was conferring with three of my clients. I see what you're driving at, Captain, but you're off on the wrong foot. I have a perfect alibi. Three of the most prominent men in this city were with——"

"Let it pass!" Wallis barked. "Moran, get Frank Leopold on the phone and tell him to report to headquarters immediately. As for you fellows"—he looked around at us—"you ought to have your story, so suppose you clear out and give us a chance to go over this room properly."

I said quickly: "May we look at that watch, Captain?"

"Sure. Go ahead."

I went over to the table and picked up the timepiece. It was an octagonal Hamilton of fairly recent vintage. Though the crystal was unbroken, the hands had stopped at 3:01. Turning it over, I saw that the case was engraved with the initials "A. Z. R." in block letters. The back of the watch was jammed in with a very definite impression; Rosenblatt had evidently struck the corner of the table with considerable force when he fell.

Willie and Zerker had already dashed for a telephone to catch their Final Nights with the story. Spike and Katie looked at the watch and then the three of us started back to the press room together. When we got out of the (*Please turn to page* 79)

A COMPLETE NOVEL by HARRIETT ASHBROOK

DECORATIONS BY NICHOLAS F. RILEY

HE KILLED A THOUSAND MEN

CHAPTER I

"IT may be life, but ain't it dull?"

The lazy young man a-sprawl in the porch chair flung down his book and gazed across the blue waters of the bay.

"I beg pardon, sir?" The voice was soft and discreet in the best traditions of English butlerdom.

"Just quoting. Guy named Herbert. He knows what he's talking about."

"Yes, sir. Very good, sir."

"You lie! It's lousy."

The discreet voice made no comment, but a tall, tinkling glass was deftly inserted into the curve of the young man's hand as it lay outflung in boredom across the wicker table beside the chair. His fingers closed around its icy smoothness.

"God! Even the liquor's lousy!"

"Beg pardon, sir, but that's the special brand you ordered the other day. Durfey & Benson."

"Well, it's lousy just the same."

The young man took another swallow, and scowled at the landscape.

"The trouble is," he said, "I'm getting old."

"Yes, sir."

"I'm twenty-nine and I'm bored as hell."

"Beg pardon, sir, but might I suggest that—"

"*No!*"

Inertia changed to sudden irritation. The young man's feet came down off the chair opposite with a bang, and he twisted in his seat to confront the soft discreet voice at his elbow.

"Sit down!"

The soft, discreet voice sat.

"Pour yourself a drink!"

Soda sizzed in a second tall, tinkling glass.

"Now be yourself!"

"Very goo—"

"*Yourself*, I said." There was a threatening edge to the tone.

"O.K., Chief."

"That's better, but make it 'Spike'."

The young man relaxed once more into his comfortable sprawl and let his eyes rest this time on the figure before him.

A surprising figure it was.

Short, just a bit over five feet, Pug Beasley had never in all his forty years, so much as seen an English household, let alone an English butler. His scarred, battered features taken separately—the broken nose, the missing teeth, the bent left ear—were not prepossessing, but the ensemble, though ugly, was comic and strangely intriguing.

"Just what," said Spike, "is the idea?"

Pug relaxed gratefully.

"Well, you see, it's like this. I been readin' a book."

"Bad business, Pug. The higher learning has ruined more than one prizefighter."

"Yeah, but I don't read so good, and I ain't a fighter no more, so I guess it ain't gonna do me no harm. Anyway this book here, I'm tellin' you about, has got a butler in it. A real classy one. And I figure to myself that this here job with you is pretty soft, and if I'm gonna hold it I'd ought to be perfectin' myself in my art. If I'm gonna be a butler, I'm gonna be a good butler, like when I was a fighter, I was a good fighter, see?"

"I see, but I don't think it's so hot."

"Well, that's maybe because I ain't so good yet. I ain't had the book but about two weeks, and I'm only at page eighty-three. Gimme time."

"Give you time and you'll work yourself right out of your soft job."

"Whaddaya mean?" Pug looked suddenly apprehensive.

"I mean that I didn't hire you to be a butler. If I'd wanted a butler, I would have gotten a butler, not a has-been bantam-weight pug. I loathe butlers. They're too damn snooty. They don't realize that this is a democratic world. A butler, for instance, would never sit down and put his feet up on the table and drink with the mahster."

"No? Well, that just shows what a sap he is."

"See that you don't get to be that kind of sap."

"Well, I'll tell you, Spike. With you—no. But in front of company, it's class. See?"

"All right, in front of company, but at your own risk. There's no telling when I may haul off and bust you one in exasperation."

Pug grinned. "Couldn't be done. My foot work's too good for you."

The two men sat for a few moments in silence, sipping their drinks and smoking. Presently Spike spoke, taking up once more the thread of his boredom.

"What do you do, Pug, when you don't know what in God's name *to* do?"

Pug considered the question judicially. "Well, if I got the price, I get drunk."

Spike shook his head. "No good. I tried that all last week. The relief's just temporary."

"Well, if you're hell bent on goin' to hell, and likker won't do it, most everybody else tries women."

Again Spike shook his head. "A vastly over-rated means of degeneration. Anyway modern morals have destroyed sin. It's called 'living life to the full' now."

Plainly Pug was stumped. Liquor and women exhausted his own personal repertoire of iniquity. His was a simple soul, untuned to the finer nuances of wickedness. In desperation he cast about into those realms of vicarious experience in which he had lately been immersed.

"Well, in this book I'm readin', the one with the classy butler in it, it starts off with a guy that's kinda like you. I mean he's got tons of jack, and he ain't bad lookin' but he ain't got nothin' to do except spend his jack and make janes, and he's already kinda tired of doin' that, so he begins lookin' up ads in the newspapers. You know like—well—"

He reached for the Saugus Weekly Index that lay on the wicker table and opened it to the column of personal notices. Not as pretentious as the city newspaper, nevertheless it boasted a personal column enlivened with photographs. There were two in today—a young man and a cow. He handed the paper to Spike.

Beneath the young man the caption read: "Will anyone knowing whereabouts of fourteen year old boy resembling this photograph communicate with Box 71, Saugus Index."

And beneath the cow: "Will anyone knowing whereabouts of Holstein cow marked like above communicate with C. F. Springer, Old Lane Road, Saugus."

There was also an advertisement of the midsummer strawberry festival of the First Presbyterian Church of Saugus, an announcement of a meeting of the Farmers' Co-operative, and three notices of strayed calves.

Spike flung the paper from him. "No, Pug, I'm afraid they won't do."

Pug agreed with him. They sighed in unison and for a long time sat gazing gloomily out across the gay ripple of the bay, musing on the barrenness of life. Presently Spike yawned prodigiously, stretched, and gathered together his sprawling members.

"I guess there's nothing for it, Pug, but to give myself up to good works."

Pug looked apprehensive. "You mean prayin' and takin' jelly to the sick?"

"Hardly. I'm not exactly the type for that. What I had in mind was a trip over to the mainland to my brother's."

Pug rose and started gathering up the glasses. "I don't suppose," he said as he busied himself with an overflowing ash tray, "that there's much accountin' for tastes."

"Meaning, of course, that you think my brother is one of the most God-awful blisters on the landscape."

Pug nodded. "What do you want to see him for?"

"I was thinking of Teddy. I feel sorry for the kid. He wrings my heart. He's been sick, and I promised him I'd come and see him and bring him some stamps. Tell Mrs. Parsons I'll be back late for dinner, maybe not before eight."

"The paper says storm tonight. You'd better look out crossin' the bay."

CHAPTER II

SPIKE, or to give him his baptismal name, Philip Tracy, was a blithe, debonair young man of great insouciance, infinite good humor and a feeling that life is more bearable if laughed at. He was twenty-nine, personable in a tall, blond way, with plenty of inherited money, and an inclination to enjoy what he had rather than make more. He had an apartment in New York and a summer cottage on an island two miles off the south shore of Long Island.

His brother, Richard, shared none of his insouciant qualities. Between the ages of one and three Richard had been subjected to the portrait of an ancestor in

a frock coat with the left hand stuck in the chest about to make a speech. It had hung over the mantel in the drawing-room and he had viewed it every day of his life and it had left an indelible imprint. Life as he saw it was serious and should be treated with proper respect. Man was created for some useful purpose like being district attorney of New York County—which Richard was. Man should strive onward and upward, ever aspiring toward something higher like being senator or governor—which was Richard's secret ambition.

Man should not waste his youth in idle bachelordom but should found a family. And as Richard was some fifteen years older than Philip, the family which he had dutifully if not passionately founded was now twelve years old and just recovering from the mumps.

Hilda, Teddy's mother, was, in the eyes of Teddy's Uncle Spike, the perfect mate for Teddy's father, R. Montgomery Tracy. Shorn of the complications of family relationship, the matter reduced to simple terms was this: If Spike considered his brother a blister, he regarded his sister-in-law as a boil.

SPIKE

How the two of them together had ever managed to produce a child as appealing as Teddy was one of the major mysteries of life which he had refused to tackle. He did, however, feel a certain responsibility toward the child in ameliorating the hardness of his lot. And in consequence he found himself some fifteen minutes after his parting with Pug, cutting through the soft ripples of the bay, heading his motor launch toward the mainland of Long Island and the Saugus wharf.

The town of Saugus by some strange miracle had escaped the depredations of summer vacationists and antique hunters, and had preserved much of the quiet, sleepy flavor that is one of the chief charms of very old and very small shore villages. There was still the white church that had been built in 1794, and the same little leaded-pane shops that had lined its streets since the Civil War.

It was into one of these that Spike strolled after he had moored his launch down at the rotting, green-lichened pier at the foot of Main Street.

Milo Taylor, the proprietor, a rosy, graying, rotund fellow, sat behind a tall roll-top desk in a back corner of the shop.

"So it's stamps you're after again," he said when Spike had stated his business. "Well, I guess I still got some left—somewhere." He started pawing about aimlessly in the roll-top desk. "I recollect I bought quite a sight of 'em about two, three years ago from a salesman that come through. Nobody much has bought 'em, though, except you and the boy up to your brother's place."

"I'm getting them for him," Spike explained. "He's been sick. Mumps."

MILO tch-tched sympathetically and heaved himself from his chair. He wandered about the shop, peering under a length of cloth here, opening up an empty tin there. And finally found what he was looking for in a large and ornate vase made from clam shells embedded in pink cement.

"Here they are," and he shook them out onto the desk. "Always had a hankerin' after stamps myself ever since I read an article about them in one of the New York papers, the time they had the big exhibition, back a spell."

The stamps were a miscellaneous lot, done up in little soiled, dusty cellophane envelopes. Spike selected several packets from South African colonies, one of air mail issues, and two mixed assortments.

"How much?"

Milo pursued his lips uncertainly. Cost accounting had no place in his scheme of merchandising. "Oh—well—say about fifty, seventy-five cents."

He laughed as he pocketed the coins Spike flipped across the counter. "You know this article I was tellin' you about says they's some stamps that are worth thousands of dollars. Thousands!"

"Don't tell Teddy about them. It would sort of take the edge off my seventy-five cents worth."

"Well, you never can tell. Now maybe unbeknownst to anybody there might be one of them real valuable ones in one of them there packets you got." Milo seemed to regard the prospect of a fortune slipping through his fingers with his usual equanimity.

"I recollect this article was tellin' about a fellow that come across a bank that was movin' from a place they'd been fifty, sixty years, and they was going to throw out a lot of old letters and stuff. And he give a hundred dollars for the lot, and what do you know if he didn't find some of these here valuable stamps, and sold 'em for seven, eight thousand dollars.

"And they was tellin' about one stamp—just *one*, mind you—that was worth twenty-five thousand—no, no, it was thirty-two thousand——"

Reluctantly Spike tore himself away from Milo's tall tales of stamp fortunes. He would have preferred to stay and listen to the store-keeper's genial ramblings, but having pledged himself to good works, he felt that the sooner he got them over the better.

SPIKE felt that his sister-in-law's greeting was unusually cool. "Teddy," she told him curtly in reply to his inquiry, "is ill."

"I know. That's why I came over. I brought him some stamps."

"*Stamps!*"

The inference of her tone was that someone was about to present her son with a bunch of adders.

"For his collection," Spike explained.

"He has no collection."

"Oh yes, he has. He was showing it to me just the other day."

"He has no collection. I ordered Perkins to burn it—this morning."

"Why you di—" Spike caught himself abruptly and finished the sentence mentally, using some of the more outspoken, four-letter terms for which the Anglo-Saxon is famous.

"To burn it—this morning. I was reading a book only last week on various phases of the Oriental plague, and they have on record three cases over a period of twenty years which are directly traceable to stamps. The plague bacillus adheres to the glue of the stamp, forming——"

Spike rose abruptly. "Where's Teddy? I want to see him."

"Teddy can see no one."

"He's not as sick as all that. The doctor said yesterday that he——"

"For a period of six weeks Teddy will not be at home to anyone—anyone. I'm reading a book now, a marvelous book on an entirely new phase of child psychology which points out that during the child's twelfth year he should go through a period of intensive——"

Spike was off the porch before she could finish her sentence. He jerked open the door of his car which he had picked up in a garage in Saugus, turned the key and jammed in the clutch. The engine roared with quite unnecessary anger. Hilda picked up her book and went on with her reading.

It was just beyond the shrubbery that shut off the house from the road that a figure jumped from the bushes and gesticulated wildly. Spike put on squealing brakes.

"Perkins, what the hell?"

"It's Master Teddy, Mr. Philip. He asked if I would give you this when I saw you instead of—of burning it. But you won't, of course, say anything to Mrs. Tracy about it, will you?"

Perkins was old and white-haired and his gentle, kindly eyes were appealing as he held out a clumsily done-up package. Spike slipped the wrapping off. It was a grubby stamp album and inside was a letter in round little-boy writing.

> "Spike: Take care of this for me. They're going to burn it on me. And if you find any good new Russian air mails save them.
>
> Teddy.
>
> P.S. Do you know a book that says that stamps are good for you? If you do will you please buy it and send it anonmusly to Mother and I will pay you back twenty cents a week from my allouance."

CHAPTER III

THE heat of the afternoon had given way before lowering clouds, and with darkness had come a storm that whipped the calm waters of the bay into tumbling waves. The wind was rising now, driving the rain against the window panes.

Spike lit an after-dinner cigarette and raised his voice above the rattling of the shutters as he addressed Pug.

"Tell me something. What the hell do you think I hired you for?"

"I couldn't rightly say," said Pug complacently. "Neither could you. The both of us was too cock-eyed that night to remember anything correct."

The stern lines of Spike's face relaxed at the recollection of a certain night three months before when he had first made the acquaintance of Mr. Pug Beasley.

It had been in the Garden. Nothing exciting, just the usual Thursday night card of second raters who might some day be champions, and second raters who had once been champions. There had been two light weights . . . stalling . . . stalling . . . round after round of heavy, dull evasion. The crowd had started to boo. . . . "Wake me up when they start to fight.". . . "Don't hit him, Clarence, you might hurt him.". . . One of the fighters had gotten mad at the crowd. Words had been flung back and forth over the ropes. "All right, if you can do any better come on up here and do it, you little dried up prune."

A small, belligerent figure had scrambled, crawled, swayed into the ring. Dead, roarin' drunk. He had fought with his bare fists and both of the fighters at once. A gallant fight! A challenge! . . . Always stick up for a game fighter. . . . Another figure had crawled and scrambled and swayed into the ring . . . larger, clad in evening clothes and silk topper . . . dead, roarin' drunk, too. It was a grand four-cornered melee.

Afterward on the way to the precinct station house in the patrol wagon, they had introduced themselves with the extreme formality of which only the very drunk are capable. "Mr. Pug Beasley, one of the bes' bantam-weight fighters in the world 'til I got too fat, one of the bes'.". . . "Mr. Spike Tracy, one of the bes'—no, no, one of the wors'——"

They had spent the night together in the same cell. In the morning the desk sergeant had been somewhat embarrassed to discover that one of his guests was the younger brother of the district attorney. He was all for letting him go quietly, but Spike refused unless he be allowed to take along a friend. Even the elastic procedure of the police department—where friends are concerned—could not be stretched quite that far. And Spike's wallet had been lost in the fight the night before.

In the end R. Montgomery Tracy had been forced to come down in person and put up the money for fines. He had not missed the opportunity to lecture his younger brother on the "thoroughly disgraceful" nature of his conduct and his associate. It was, as Spike frequently pointed out, the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Its only discordant feature was Pug's insistence on doing a little work. He received a salary far in excess of his actual services, and occasionally his conscience smote him.

"I hired you," said Spike, drifting back to the present, "to do what I tell you to do. Light up." He tossed him a pack of cigarettes and a lighter.

"How's the kid, Teddy?" Pug asked when he was settled comfortably, smoking.

"Lousy." Spike related the afternoon's misadventures.

"Ain't I glad my old lady was a bum," Pug commented complacently, "and left me on a doorstep. It's fierce what kids with mothers has got to endure. I'll bet——"

The rest of his sentence was drowned in the roar of thunder and wind.

"Tough night out," Spike said.

"Yeah."

"Milo Taylor says people pay thousands of dollars for just one stamp."

JOHN FAIRLEIGH

"He's a liar or there's more damn fools in the world than I thought."

"Yes, but aren't they lucky?"

"Who?"

"The damn fools. At least they have—something." Spike's voice became weighted with pity and tragedy. "They have their stamps, their porcelains from the tenth Ming dynasty, their match box covers. But what have I? Nothing, nothing! My life is empty. My empty arms are——"

"Shut up!" Pug sat up listening.

"What's the matter?"

"I thought I heard——"

Spike listened for a moment. "So do I. Go to the door."

Pug crossed the room, shot back the heavy bolt, opened the door a crack. Wind and rain billowed into the room. He peered out into the darkness. The door was pushed wider. Then it crashed open with the weight against it.

A woman, drenched, wild, haggard, fell heavily across the threshold and lay there, moaning softly.

"Get a load o' *this* in your empty arms," Pug said quietly.

CHAPTER IV

THE breaking waves dashed high on the low, sandy shore of Sark Island, and collapsed into frantic, boiling surf, cutting the tiny bit of land off from the mainland, enveloping it in storm and hurricane.

At the eastern end of the island, the fantastic scroll work that surrounded the lookout porch at the top of the Huddleston's old Victorian farm house was torn away and hurled crashing against the barn. Mrs. Parsons' tiny, three-roomed cottage, low and compact, located midway along the north shore escaped the storm's fury, but her garden in all the lushness of mid-summer was trampled and ruined.

At the Tracy place on the extreme western end, shutters were torn off, and at the tiny pier at the foot of the lawn the motor launch snapped its moorings, was picked up by the frenzied sea and hurled back against rocks, dashed into splinters.

The pier itself with its landing platform used by the ferry that came across twice a day from Saugus to bring provisions and mail, stood firm. It was alone however in its pigmy defiance, for no ferry would risk the boiling, mountainous sea that separated Sark Island from the mainland.

At the Tracy house the roaring outside only threw into greater relief the strange quiet of the upstairs room where the woman lay. A lamp burned fitfully on the dresser—there was no electricity on Sark Island—and the room was hung with shadows through which the white face on the pillow could be dimly seen.

Spike and Pug stood at the foot of the bed, and Mrs. Parsons sat on a chair beside it, her large capable hands smoothing the tangled black hair, wiping rain and mud from the face, turning up the cuffs of the pajama coat that was much, much too long and large for the frail body within it.

The woman tossed, muttered, babbled strange incoherencies. She seemed to strain, now in some agony of effort, now in some terror of recoil. A violent fit of shivering shook her.

"Get a hot water bottle and fill it," Mrs. Parsons said quietly to Pug. When he left the room, she turned to Spike.

"She's very ill, Mr. Tracy. She's cold and yet I'm sure she has a fever."

Spike said nothing but went to the window and peered out into the frenzied night. She divined his purpose.

"No use thinking about that," she said.

"She ought to have a doctor, though."

"I know, but how could you get one?"

"I could take the launch," he said, ignorant of the fact that even as he spoke it tossed in a million splinters on the boiling sea.

She shook her head. "You couldn't get beyond the breakers. You'd be smashed to pieces. When you've lived on Sark Island for twenty years like I have, Mr. Tracy, you'll know better than even to think of it. We're marooned. We are, every once in a while."

"Then there's nothing to be done?"

"Nothing, except to keep her warm and quiet if we can."

"You'll stay tonight?"

She nodded, and turned back to the woman moaning softly in delirium.

Monday night . . . all day Tuesday . . . Tuesday night. The storm raged. Inside the quiet room the woman lay for long hours sunk in a coma. Then she would rouse, try vainly to get up, cry out, sink back sobbing, babbling. Mrs. Parsons was with her constantly during the day and slept in an adjoining room at night. Pug and Spike took turns sitting beside the bed during the night, three hours each, alternating like sailors on watch.

It was in the early hours of Wednesday morning just as a murky grayness was beginning to creep into the room that the gale broke. Gradually Spike, sitting beside the bed, became aware that there was no roaring and pounding of wind and surf. He went to the window and peered out into the graying dawn. The storm was over.

He came back and sat down again and looked at the face against the pillow. White, oh so white and frail, with great, dark circles of tragedy under the eyes. There were tiny crow's feet at the corner of the eyes and the muscles of cheek and throat had begun to droop. Here was no first flush of youth, but a woman in the indeterminate thirties. Over all the face there lay an expression of pain and weariness and beaten, broken effort. And yet with it all she was strangely, inexplicably beautiful.

At nine o'clock that Wednesday morning Mrs. Parsons stood on the veranda with Pug and surveyed the ravage of the storm. It was very still now and her ear was cocked for any slightest sound from the room upstairs. At the pier at the foot of the lawn she could see Spike waiting for the ferry that was laboring toward the landing place on its first trip since Monday evening.

"Quite a lot of passengers, seems like," she commented as the ferry drew nearer and she could see a small knot of figures on the foredeck. "Maybe the Huddlestons are expecting company."

The ferry nudged against the pier, and the ferryman sprang out with his packet of mail. Mrs. Parsons could see him handing some of it to Spike. Then the little knot of figures on the foredeck swarmed over the landing platform. An excited movement of their arms and legs could be discerned even at a distance. Mrs. Parsons shaded her eyes with her hand and squinted the better to see.

"Looks like maybe they're friends of Mr. Tracy. He seems to know 'em."

She could see them now, standing in a ring around Spike. He was shaking hands with several of them and they seemed to be telling him something. They stood in confab for perhaps ten minutes. Then the group broke up. Three of the men went one way along the north shore and three others along the south shore. The ferryman climbed into his gently rocking boat and started back across the bay.

Spike came toward the house, walking slowly, his forehead wrinkling as he scanned the newspaper he held in his hands. He mounted the steps of the veranda and for a moment stood looking strangely at Mrs. Parsons and Pug.

"Why, Mr. Tracy, whatever is the mat——"

He motioned her to silence. "Come on inside," he said and led the way into the house. He closed the door carefully behind them, then faced the two puzzled creatures and spoke slowly, thoughtfully.

"The ferryman says that he brought a passenger over here on his last trip Monday night about seven —a woman."

Mrs. Parsons' anxious face lighted. "It must have been—her. Does he know who she is, where her folks are?"

Spike shook his head. "He never saw her before. He says she seemed nervous and distraught. 'All wild-like and terrible upset' was the way he put it, and she gave him five dollars to bring her over."

"Did she say who she was coming to see? The Huddlestons maybe?"

"She didn't say anything. And now—" He paused and again he eyed Mrs. Parsons and Pug as if he were weighing certain possibilities.

"Those men you saw down there, the ones that came over on the ferry, are detectives from the New York police department. I know some of them. I—I lied like hell to them, and I expect—" He paused again and this time the gaze he held them with was a command. "—and I expect you two to do the same," he said quietly, and spread the front page of the *New York American* before them.

FAMOUS STAMP COLLECTOR
VICTIM OF STRANGE MURDER

Prentice Crossley, Owner of Fortune in Stamps, Found in Fifth Avenue Home, Stabbed in the Back

Linda Crossley, Granddaughter, Missing.
Believed in Long Island Hide-out.

And beside the screaming, ghastly headlines was a photograph. It was a woman of dark and tragic beauty, the woman who lay in the room upstairs.

CHAPTER V

INSPECTOR HERSCHMAN, head of the homicide squad was built along the approved lines. The average citizen would spot him in a minute for what he was—a Headquarters dick, earnest but heavy-handed. Having worked himself up from a patrol beat on the sidewalks of New York, he knew intimately Willie the Wop, and Mike the Mick, but his acquaintance with the higher strata of society was limited. Stamp collectors, for instance, were *terra incognita* to him.

"They don't even call 'em that," he complained to District Attorney Tracy as the two of them sat hunched over the reports, studying them for the tenth time. "They call 'em philatelists."

"That's beside the point," the district attorney said irritably. "What I want to know is what progress have you made."

"Well—we got the report from the men I sent out to Sark Island."

"Yes?"

"They combed every inch of it and they didn't find hide nor hair of the woman. And none of the people on the island did either. We questioned them all—a farmer family named Huddleston, and a Mrs. Parsons and—and your brother."

There was a short silence. The eyes of the two men met, then dropped swiftly, as if each were somewhat embarrassed by the mutual divination.

"Speaking of your brother," Herschman continued with forced casualness, "it strikes me he's—well, he's a pretty bright fellow."

"At times, not always."

"Yeah, but—" The sentence trailed off into nothing. The inspector was thinking back to a certain famous case in which the police department had covered itself with glory for the astuteness of its solution. Being at heart an essentially honest fellow his spirit if not his flesh blushed when he thought of the flattering things that had been said about the chief of the homicide squad, and all the time it was that young Spike. . . .

Again his eyes met those of the district attorney's.

"I was thinking," he said, "that it might be a good idea if we were to. . . ."

"I have already," the district attorney snapped as if unwilling to admit it. "He ought to be here now. I told him two o'clock, but of course he's never on time."

At three-thirty Spike arrived at the office of the district attorney. He rushed in with breathless cheerfulness, greeted Herschman genially and then turned to his brother.

"Make it snappy, old dear. I'm on my way to a squash match up at the Athletic Club. What am I on the carpet for now—drinking, women or embezzlement?"

The district attorney looked uncomfortable, pushed a box of large, fat cigars toward his brother, tried to smile and said, "Sit down, Philip."

"Can't. I'm dashing." But he took out his case, lit a cigarette and took a temporary seat on the corner of the desk. The district attorney cast a significant glance at the inspector.

"We were—uh—just wondering, Mr. Tracy——"

"Inspector! And after all we've been through together!"

The inspector looked a bit embarrassed, substituted "Spike" for "Mr. Tracy," and went on. "We were wondering if maybe you couldn't —uh—well, in this Crossley murder case. . . ."

"Oh yes, I talked to your men yesterday. In fact I spent half the day helping them. We couldn't find a trace of her. How come you tracked her to Sark Island?"

"Her picture was published in the Tuesday morning papers, and the guy that runs the ferry recognized it and tipped us off. Said he took her over Monday night about seven."

"Well," said Spike lightly, "she isn't there now. She probably got hold of a boat somewhere Monday night and went back to the mainland before the storm broke and is now—" Suddenly he broke off, struck by an idea. "I wonder," he said, "I just wonder." For a moment he was thoughtful. Then he turned toward the district attorney.

"My boat!" he said. "That motor launch I had. You know it, Richard. It was gone yesterday morning and I just assumed that it had broken away in the storm and drifted off. I had to row over to the mainland in the Huddleston's row boat. That's why I was so late. I bet she took the launch. Come to think of it, it seems to me I recall hearing a sound like a motor starting about eight o'clock Monday night. I didn't pay much attention to it at the time, but now I remember.

"Listen," and he turned excitedly to Herschman, "send out a description of her—Elco, twenty-four foot cruiser, engine number 47926, painted white with. . . ."

Herschman reached for the telephone, put through quick commands to his office, set in motion the vast network of a police broadcast, through radio and mail and telegraph. As he turned from the telephone, Spike gathered up his gloves and stick and tamped out his cigarette.

"Well, I'll be getting along. Glad I was able to help you a bit. If you find the boat let me know. I had to buy a new one this afternoon."

"But—but Philip!" The district attorney half rose from his chair, "we thought you might—perhaps—ah—"

Spike looked innocently blank, and R. Montgomery Tracy floundered. It was Inspector Herschman who finally came to the point in the blunt, flat-

footed manner in which years before he had pounded the sidewalks of New York.

"Listen, Mr. Tra— Spike! Here's the idea. You were a big help on that last case we had. So now we want you in on this. See?"

"Sorry, Inspector, and thanks for the kind words, but I couldn't possibly. I'm really much too busy."

The district attorney snorted in disdain. "Doing what, may I ask?"

"I'M supposed to be at the Athletic Club this minute. I'm going out to dinner and the theater tonight, and afterward I'm going to a party from which I shall probably not recover for several days. It's that kind."

"Now listen here, Spike." The inspector was roused, and he bore down upon him in his third degree manner. As a matter of fact the ordeal to which Mr. Philip Tracy was subjected in the fifteen minutes that followed was not entirely unlike some of the more violent bludgeonings of the police department. At any rate he emerged at the end of half an hour only because with a sigh of exhaustion he gave way—slightly.

"All right, all right," he said irritably. "Give me your damn reports and I'll take 'em home tonight and read 'em over while I'm dressing, and if I'm in any condition tomorrow I'll drop in. But I won't guarantee anything. It's going to be a tough party." He reached for the typed copies of the reports that lay on the district attorney's desk, stuffed them into his pocket and escaped from the inquisition.

LINDA CROSSLEY

He hailed a taxi in front of Police Headquarters, but the address he gave the driver was not that of the Athletic Club. It was his own town apartment on East 102nd Street. He leaned back against the leather cushions, reached a hand into the breast pocket in which he carried the police department reports and grinned with satisfaction. Then he glanced apprehensively at his watch. Pug was to call him at six.

But the cab made good time and he had almost ten minutes to spare before the telephone rang. "Saugus, Long Island, calling Mr. Tracy." And presently Pug's voice came over the wire.

"Everything O. K. I mean it's just the same."

"She conscious yet?"

"No. She don't toss around and moan so much, but she ain't conscious."

"Now get this, Pug. Go out tonight and pick up any wreckage of the launch that you find on the beach and bury it. And then if anybody asks you what happened to the launch, look dumb and say somebody must have stolen it—that it disappeared Monday night, *before* the storm. See?"

"I don't see, but it's O. K. Anything else?"

"If I'm not out tomorrow, call me at the same time, same place."

"O. K."

CHAPTER VI

ALTHOUGH Spike spent three hours of troubled concentration on the reports which he had taken from the district attorney's office the previous afternoon, the gist of them can be put down here in a few paragraphs.

At eight o'clock on Monday morning, June 5, Kathryn Dennis, for four years second maid in the home of Prentice Crossley, entered the library for the daily straightening, and discovered her employer lying hunched over the library table. The dressing gown he wore was maroon, and the dark stain down the back was not immediately noticeable. One hand was outstretched, the fingers half tensed. She thought at first he was asleep. Then she realized that he was dead.

At her summons the police had arrived some twenty minutes later. Kathryn and her fellow servant, Annie Farley, the cook, had been questioned. They stated that the last time they had seen Prentice Crossley alive had been on the previous evening, Sunday, about eight-thirty. They had a sudden impulse to attend a Sunday evening movie, so together they had gone to the library and asked his permission to absent themselves from the house that evening. He had assented, and they had left by the front door. As they went out they had seen Linda Crossley, granddaughter of Prentice Crossley, come down the stairs and enter the library.

They had returned to the house at eleven-thirty and had entered by the servants entrance under the brownstone stoop. They had not noticed whether the light was burning in the library. In going to their own rooms on the top floor of the house they had used the rear stairway so they had not passed the door of the library on the first floor, nor the door to Linda Crossley's bedroom on the second floor. They had gone directly to bed and had heard no sounds during the night. In the morning, after Kathryn had discovered her employer dead, they had gone to Linda Crossley's room to inform her of the tragedy. Her room was empty. The bed had not been slept in.

The two servants had refused to remain in the house, even with the police there, and had gone to stay with a cousin of Kathryn Dennis in Yonkers.

The photographs of Prentice Crossley's library showed a large glass-topped desk in the center of the room, and behind it a small safe. It was across the desk that the body was found sprawled. It was in the safe that Prentice Crossley was reputed to have kept his famous and valuable collection of stamps.

The report of the fingerprint experts showed that there were no fingerprints on the safe. On the glass-topped desk there were many, mostly Crossley's own. But along the right edge there were the distinct marks of a different set of prints—prints which corresponded exactly with those found in the granddaughter's bedroom upstairs, on dressing table, toilet articles and desk accessories.

A preliminary report from Special Detective Hare of the homicide squad showed that all of Prentice Crossley's affairs at the time of his death were in the hands of his lawyer, John Fairleigh. Fairleigh at the time of the murder was in Los Angeles attending a legal convention. He had been summoned immediately, and was on his way back to New York to confer with the police. He had in his possession Crossley's will, and the combination to the Crossley safe. No other persons had been found who knew the contents of the will or the combination of the safe.

DETECTIVE HARE also reported that through the American Philatelic Society and the American Stamp Dealers Association he had succeeded in locating the stamp dealers with whom Crossley had transacted most of his business. They were Kurt Koenig, an independent dealer, and Jason Fream of the Acme Stamp Company. He had also located Homer Watson, a private collector of rarities, known in philatelic circles as a keen rival of Crossley. The rivalry apparently had been friendly, however, for Watson admitted that he was a frequent visitor to the Crossley home and that he and Crossley occasionally traded stamps.

None of the three when interviewed could throw any light on the murder. All agreed to hold themselves in readiness to assist the police, should their knowledge of the Crossley stamp collection be of any use. The collection was kept, they said, in the small safe in the library.

The report of the medical examiner showed that Crossley had died from a deep stab wound in the back. The examiner was unable to place exactly the time of death. "Some time before midnight, June 4, Sunday," was the best he could do in view of the fact that many hours had elapsed before the discovery of the body. "An examination of the wound shows that the instrument which caused death was a dagger of some sort about ten or twelve inches long, of a peculiar triangular shape with tiny notches at intervals along the three cutting edges."

The report had been made, of course, that first morning immediately after the removal of the body, before a thorough search of the house had confirmed the astuteness of the medical examiner.

But it was not until Friday morning that Spike found out about that. It was eleven-thirty when he appeared at the inspector's office, heavy-lidded and morose, like one who has drunk too deeply the night before. He tossed the reports on the desk and sank wearily into a chair.

"Sorry," he said, "but I didn't have a chance to look at 'em." He yawned prodigiously. "God, I feel lousy!"

The inspector surveyed him with a look of pained irritation as if he were torn between a desire to humor him and to bust him one on the jaw. Instead he rose and paced the floor, his hands thrust into his pockets, his lips nervously chewing an unlighted cigar. Presently the telephone rang. He picked it up . . . scowled . . . listened. . . .

"Tell 'em to go to— No, no, never mind, we can't do that. Hand 'em out the regular line. We're working on the case and expect to make an arrest before night. You know, the old baloney."

He slammed the receiver down. "Newspapers!" he snapped. "They're yapping again."

Spike dropped an apparently heavy, aching head onto his outstretched arms. "What about?" he asked, his voice muffled. "This Crossley case. If this fellow Fairleigh who's coming today tells me what I think, I'll have plenty for 'em by tonight."

"Who's Fairleigh?" Spike asked sleepily.

"Crossley's lawyer. Had a wire from him this morning. He's arriving at noon by plane and we're going to meet him at the Crossley house. He's bringing the old boy's will with him, and he's going to open the safe. I'm having three of these stamp birds up too, to check up on this collection of Crossley's that supposed to be so valuable."

Herschman continued his pacing, talking more to himself than to the unresponsive figure sprawled over the desk. "If the girl's the beneficiary . . . plenty, plenty . . . and with that bayonet. . . ."

"You sound kind of maudlin yourself," Spike cut in, "sorta the way I feel. The war's over. We've beaten up our bayonets into fenders and—Oh, my head!"

The inspector ignored what he felt was an obvious bid for unmerited sympathy and went to a large steel cabinet on the opposite side of his office, unlocked it, and brought out an object carefully wrapped in gauze. He laid it on the table and gingerly lifted the top layer of gauze.

It was a bayonet of peculiar design—a bayonet that was still shining and polished, a foot long, its three triangular blades serrated at intervals.

Spike raised his head, looked at it. "What's that?" he asked with sleepy indifference.

"That, my boy, is what killed Prentice Crossley. We found it wiped clean as a whistle, upstairs under some clothes in a chest."

Spike's head dropped into his arms once more and he hunched his shoulders into a more restful position.

"And if the will shows that Linda Crossley is sole beneficiary of her grandfather . . ." Herschman left the sentence unfinished, but there was a certain excited anticipation in his tone.

Spike snorted softly, but presently when the inspector began making sounds of departure, he raised his head once more.

"I guess," he said between yawns, "I'll go up there with you—to the Crossley place. Maybe if I got up and moved around a little bit it would clear my head."

CHAPTER VII

"There is no definite record of the number of these stamps that came off the press of the *Official Gazette* and were sold through the wicket of the Georgetown post office, but we do know that today there is in existence only one of this issue, the British Guiana, 1 cent, 1856. This tiny bit of paper that originally sold for 1 penny is today valued at—"

PATROLMAN Finney dropped the book into his lap and stared wide-eyed at his vis-a-vis, Patrolman Smith.

"Holy Mother Mary and Joseph!" he gasped. "Would you believe it now, what it says here?" He picked the book up again and scanned the last line carefully to make sure there was no mistake. ". . . is today valued at *thirty-two thousand, sand, five hundred lars!*"

RICHARD TRACY

Smith who up to this time had taken no part and little interest in Finney's reading aloud, suddenly straightened in his chair.

"Thirty-two thousand five hundred dollars!" Finney repeated as if to assure himself as well as his companion. Then he continued reading slowly: ". . . . has for the past eight years, been in the possession of that well-known collector of stamp rarities, *Prentice Crossley.*" He slammed shut the slim red-bound volume he had taken from the bookcase and looked incredulously at Smith.

"Well, whaddaya think of that? Thirty-two thousand, five hundred dollars for a measley bit of a stamp, and him owning it." At the word of "him" he jerked his head toward the large glass-topped desk that stood in the center of the library. Before it stood a massive, straight-backed Jacobean chair, empty.

"Nuts." Smith commented succinctly.

"Nuts!" Finney repeated in emphatic agreement. "Any bird that'd pay $32,500 for one stamp is nuts."

"Off his nut," Smith elaborated.

"Completely off. Just nutty."

Having exhausted the synonyms in their vocabulary for mental unbalance, the two patrolmen sank into a contemplative silence. The easy chairs of the library were very easy and they had been sitting in them for four hours. Presently the two heads began to nod . . . nod . . . lower. . . .

Smith came to with a jerk and gave his companion a hasty shake. "Beat it! Someone's coming."

Finney jumped to his feet, straightened his uniform and quickly resumed his post in the front hall just outside the library door.

It was John Fairleigh.

"Yes, sir, we're expecting you, sir," Finney assured him as the visitor was shown into the library. "The inspector just called a few minutes ago and said he was starting on his way and he'll be here any minute."

For a moment after he crossed the threshhold of the room Fairleigh stood very still, his eyes traveling slowly from chair, to table, to window, to bookcase. It was as if he were making sure it was the same room he had known in his years of dealing with Prentice Crossley.

A tall man, firmly built, with a crisp gray mustache and gray-blue eyes that were hard and at the same time filled with compassion.

He took off his hat, unstrapped the brief-case he had brought with him, and looked through the papers it contained. There were deep, troubled wrinkles between his eyes.

The inspector and the district attorney arrived ten minutes later. In their wake trailed a sleepy young man who seemed chiefly concerned with gaining the soft haven of an easy chair.

"You have with you the documents we requested?" the district attorney inquired.

Fairleigh nodded. "Yes, I went directly from the landing field to my office, and then came up here."

THE three men seated themselves, and Fairleigh reached for his brief-case lying on the window seat, but the district attorney held up a restraining hand.

"Before we go into that, Fairleigh, perhaps you can tell us something about Crossley himself. We've been able to get surprisingly little information about him except in a—well, a professional way. I mean we have plenty of newspaper files telling of his activities in the local stamp club and his collection of stamps, but there's very little we know or have been able to find out about the man himself, his personal life and his friends and associates. You should be able to help us there."

A slow, crooked smile twisted Fairleigh's face and he shook his head doubtfully. "I'm not so sure about that. You see, he didn't have any. For fifteen years, ever since he retired from business, he has had just one passion—his stamps. In the last five years his health has been very poor and he hasn't been able to get out much. Outside of a few fellow collectors and one or two stamp dealers and myself, I don't suppose ten people have come to the house in these five years."

"But you have been here frequently?"

"Oh, once or twice a month. Sometimes oftener."

"May I ask you to tell us just what was your business relationship to Mr. Crossley. I know you were his lawyer, but that term can cover a variety of services."

"As I said before, Mr. Crossley retired from business fifteen years ago. He had made plenty of money in the chemical business, so he pulled out while he still had it. He invested it in various ways and then turned these investments over to me to manage. I'm a sort of legal and financial steward."

"Well then, as such you must know a great deal about the more personal side of Crossley's affairs?"

"As much as there is to know, which is very little. Outside of his stamp collection, I don't believe he had an interest."

"How about his granddaughter?"

Fairleigh did not answer immediately. His eyes sought the window giving out onto a tiny enclosed garden at the back of the house. Presently he spoke, choosing his words carefully.

"Mr. Crossley's attitude toward his granddaughter was—strange. There was on the surface little of the ordinary signs of tenderness and affection in their relationship, but at bottom he was—I think he loved her—desperately." He placed a curious emphasis on the last word.

"I suppose you know," the district attorney said, "that she has disappeared."

Fairleigh nodded, his eyes still gazing out onto the little back garden, his voice low and slightly strained. "And I suppose you infer from that disappearance that she—"

"We're inferring nothing just at present. We would like to know if you have any idea where she may have gone."

"Not the slightest."

"But you knew her as well as Crossley, did you not?"

"My meetings with him were purely of a business nature and I seldom saw her. She had a very gentle, retiring disposition."

"But do you know of any friends to whom she might have gone, who might be hiding her?"

Fairleigh shook his head firmly. "I know none of her friends. As a matter of fact I doubt whether she had many. Her grandfather absorbed her completely."

"She was very devoted to him?"

"Very."

"To the exclusion of everyone else?"

"As far as I know, yes."

The district attorney switched to another tack. "The main purpose of our meeting, Mr. Fairleigh, as you know, is to see the will of Prentice Crossley. You have it with you?"

For answer Fairleigh reached for his brief-case and drew out a document bound in stiff blue paper.

"IT'S not a complicated will," he said flipping through the three sheets of legal foolscap which composed it. "Mr. Crossley had a sufficient investment in his former chemical company and in first mortgage real estate bonds to yield a yearly income of between fifteen and twenty thousand dollars. I may say that originally his income was much larger, but he chose to use part of his capital in the purchase of stamp rarities which I can assure you are very expensive. He has paid between thirty and forty thousand dollars for a single stamp."

The inspector and the district attorney looked properly astounded and Fairleigh smiled. "Collectors, you know, are that way. To you and to me a stamp is only an old, faded bit of paper but to collectors it holds all the romance and adventure of life. It's difficult to understand their psychology, but there it is. However, this stamp collection business does have its more practical side. All together just at a guess, I would say that Mr. Crossley invested between two hundred and three hundred thousand dollars in stamps. In the course of twenty years, though, the value of this investment has increased. Last year when he had his collection officially appraised, the valuation put on it was $400,000."

"But what we want to know," Herschman interrupted impatiently, "is who gets it all. Let's read the will."

"But that's just what I'm doing. I'm enumerating the various assets of the estate that are enumerated here," and he thumped the paper. "There are his investments in chemicals and real estate; there is his stamp collection; there is this house." He paused.

"Yes, but who gets 'em all?" Herschman persisted.

"There is a small bequest to myself. Outside of that everything is left to his granddaughter, Linda Crossley. There are no other beneficiaries. The will is very simple."

Inspector Herschman who had been holding himself rather stiffly in his chair, slowly relaxed with satisfaction. He turned toward the easy chair slightly outside the circle made by himself, the district attorney and the lawyer, and flung a "what-did-I-tell-you" glance at the young man therein. But the young man was apparently asleep.

The district attorney looked slightly incredulous. Being a lawyer he enjoyed fine technical complications. Simplicity baffled him. He reached for the document which Fairleigh had been holding, but the lawyer had already started to fold it up.

"Let me have a look at it," he said.

Fairleigh continued to fold. "But really there's nothing to see. As I explained, it is a very simple will, and I've given you a complete if somewhat informal paraphrase of the whole thing." He thrust the will back into his brief-case and started to adjust the buckles. The district attorney bridled.

"Just the same, Mr. Fairleigh," he said, "I think I would like to see it for myself."

Fairleigh seemed to hesitate. Then he handed it over. For several moments there was silence in the library as the district attorney with the inspector looking over his shoulder read the document. When he had finished it, he laid it out on the table, smoothing the creases carefully.

"There's just one thing you didn't mention," he said to Fairleigh. "This paragraph here." His finger indicated the line and he read it aloud. "And on my friend and adviser, John Fairleigh, I lay the heavy burden of the guidance of my granddaughter, Linda Crossley. Guidance not only in her financial and legal affairs, but in her personal life. To him I bequeath the onerous task of saving her, if possible, from the consequences of her own indiscretions, and to him also I bequeath $50,000 in recognition of his steadfast refusal to betray the trust which I have had in him."

The district attorney paused. When he spoke again his voice was icy with sarcasm. "Do you consider $50,000 a 'small bequest' Mr. Fairleigh?"

"Small in proportion to the balance."

"It seems to me that this paragraph that I have just read indicates a much greater degree of intimacy with Crossley and with his granddaughter than you have led us to believe."

Fairleigh nodded. "Yes, it does look that way."

"Just what does it mean, then? Have you been deliberately mis-stating the—"

"No," Fairleigh interrupted sharply, "I have mis-stated nothing."

"Then what does this mean?" The district attorney persisted. "'. . . in recognition of his steadfast refusal to betray the trust which I have had in him.'"

KURT KOENIG

"I have managed Mr. Crossley's business interest for the last fifteen years as I told you. I have held a power of attorney. I have never misused that power."

But the district attorney was not satisfied. "What does this mean?" pointing again to the paragraph in question. "'. . . the onerous task of saving her if possible from the consequences of her own indiscretions.' What does that mean?"

The hard blue eyes of Fairleigh met the direct gaze of the district attorney.

"I haven't the slightest idea," he replied quietly.

CHAPTER VIII

IN the hall outside the library Patrolman Finney did his best to be entertaining, but in this he was not altogether successful. Two of the three visitors—the tall thin one and the tall fat one—sat stiffly in their chairs ranged against the wall and looked very solemn and bored.

But the short round one, the one with the slight German accent and the elegant dandyish haberdashery, and the blue eyes that crinkled up at the corners, wasn't at all solemn. He actually chuckled when Finney related the story of the versatile gentlemen of British Guiana in the year 1856. The other two frowned at this unsuitable levity, but the short round one seemed not to notice their disapproval.

"Thirty-two thousand, five hundred dollars," he repeated at the conclusion of Finney's story. "But, my friend, that is nothing, nothing." His fat little hands with dimples where there should have been knuckles brushed aside the $32,500 as one would brush aside a fly. Then his airy manner changed suddenly.

"You want to see something?" he asked in a low, conspiratorial tone.

Finney nodded. Cautiously the short round man looked up and down the hall to make sure that there were no spies lurking in the shadows of stair and wall. He cocked his ear as if listening for the approach of stealthy footsteps. Then he reached inside his coat and slowly drew forth a wallet and extracted therefrom a tiny bit of paper.

"There! Look!" he half whispered.

Finney looked. His eyes popped.

"Holy Mother Mary and Joseph!" He bent forward and examined it more closely. Blue against white. *"Deutsches Reich."* Simple circular design. But it was the overprint in a deeper blue that held his gaze. "50,000,000,000 M."

"Fifty billion marks!" he repeated in awe. "How much is that in American money?"

"Well, if you use the pre-war valuation of the mark at 23.8 cents it amounts to $11,900,000,000."

"Holy Mother!" The sheer magnitude of the sum reduced even blasphemy to its simplest terms. "But aren't you afraid to carry it around with you, just loose like that?"

The little round man struck a brave attitude.

"No," he said, "I'm not afraid. In fact—" He paused, peering into the depths of his wallet. "In fact I carry three or four of them with me usually—as souvenirs—for my friends. Permit me."

With a ceremonious bow he presented his open palm. On it reposed four of the little blue bits of paper with the deeper blue overprinting. He selected one, pressed it upon the patrolman. "With my compliments, my friend, I beg of you." The crinkles around the blue eyes deepened.

Finney grinned uncertainly. "Say, what the hell?"

The little round man laughed aloud this time, the merry laugh of one who is enjoying his gentle joke. Then he explained. "You see, my friend, in Germany after the war, they had inflation, very dreadful inflation. First the value of the stamps was doubled, then trebled, then on up, up, up into the millions, the billions. This one here was the highest they issued. A monstrosity! A curiosity! You can buy all you want of them these days at my shop for two cents each."

"Well, I'll be—" Finney laughed at the memory of his recent awe before a mere two-cents worth. "Say, listen here, who are you and these two birds over there? The D. A. told me he was expecting three men and to let 'em in and keep 'em here until he called for 'em, but he didn't tell me the names."

The little round man performed the introductions. The tall thin one was Homer Watson, a private collector, and the tall fat one was Jason Fream of the Acme Stamp Company, and he himself was Kurt Koenig.

"Well, is my face red?" Finney inquired rhetorically. "Here I'm tellin' you all about your own business, and you the guys that the D. A. is havin' in to give the lowdown on Crossley's stamps."

"Not quite all," Koenig corrected. "There are, you know, a few more stamps in the world beside the British Guiana, one cent, 1856."

"Yeah, and I understand Crossley had 'em."

"He had many of them, very valuable ones too."

"Like for instance?"

"Well, there are the Mauritius, if you're interested in stories."

Finney indicated that he was and Koenig was about to launch into the tale when the door from the library was opened.

As the three stamp experts entered at Herschman's summons, the sleepy young man in the easy chair roused slightly, shifted his weary weight, and then settled once more into a doze, his head sunk on his chest, his face shielded by his hand.

In the strained quiet atmosphere of the room, there were few words of greeting exchanged. Fairleigh, knowing what was expected of him went immediately to the safe. He reached for the knob, but before he touched it he suddenly withdrew his hand and turned to Herschman.

"I suppose you have—ah—fingerprints, you know?"

"Of course," Herschman replied impatiently. "The first morning."

Fairleigh waited for him to go on but the inspector preserved a discreet silence. Finally the lawyer set to work. The safe was not a large one—it stood about three feet high—but apparently the combination was complicated. It was almost five minutes before he swung the door open.

HERSCHMAN moved the reading lamp closer to the edge of the glass-topped desk and switched on the light so that its rays shone full on the front of the open safe. Rows of squat, thick, leather-bound books with names embossed on the back in gold: "United States"—"France"—"British Empire"— "Air Mail." In the upper right hand corner there was an inner steel compartment.

"These are the stamp albums," Fairleigh explained, pointing to the books. "The more valuable stamps were kept in here." He indicated the inner compartment. "It has a combination too."

He set to work at the tiny knob on the door. In a few moments it was open. He rose from his stooping posture and stood back away from the safe.

The district attorney nodded to the three stamp men—the tall thin one, and the tall fat one and the little round one. They gathered round the safe, lifted out the squat, thick books, drew forth from the inner compartment, trays containing tiny square steel boxes, placed them on the glass-topped desk. Fairleigh, the district attorney and the inspector withdrew to the far end of the room to allow the three experts to work without interruption.

The quiet of the room was broken only by the hum of traffic on Fifth Avenue at the front, and by the occasional domestic sound that drifted in through the windows at the back from neighboring apartment houses.

Presently the three experts put away their tiny glasses, laid down their tweezers, flexed the cramped muscles of their backs, bent for more than an hour over the glass-topped desk. The district attorney, the inspector and Fairleigh rose and joined them.

It was Fream who acted as spokesman. His voice was shaken as one mindful of his painful duty in breaking bad news, but at the same time conscious of the drama of his disclosure and making the most of it.

"The Crossley collection," he said, "has been looted of its finest treasures. It is impossible just now in so short a time to check the entire collection, to give a total estimate of the loss. But we have been able to ascertain this morning that more than $85,000 worth of stamps are missing."

He picked up a sheet of paper on which he had made some notes. "There are missing the following: the Mauritius, two-penny 'post office' valued at $17,500; a thirteen-cent Hawaiian 'missionary' catalogued at $2,500; the nine-kreuzer Baden, 1861, with the color error worth $11,000; the six-real Spanish, 1851, also with a color error worth $12,500; the French 1849, one-franc, 'tete-beche,' catalogued at $10,000, and—"

He paused.

"And the British Guiana, one-cent, 1856, the most valuable stamp in the world, worth $32,500."

CHAPTER IX

THE Buick sedan streaked through the green and white tiled Holland Tunnel hundreds of feet below the surface of the Hudson River. Close behind—but not too close—followed the Cadillac roadster.

Across the lush, dank green of the salt marshes of Jersey, through the back streets of Newark, into the open country west of Irvington. It was more than an hour before the lead car slowed up, turned off the main street of a quiet little village on the western edge of the New Jersey Forestry Reservation and bumped over a rutted, unpaved road. It stopped finally before a small farm bungalow set in several acres of truck garden.

The driver got out and went into the house. The second car drove on by, turned down a side road and parked behind a low shelter of trees and bushes.

Through the lattice of the protecting shrubbery Spike could see the bungalow with Fairleigh's car parked in front of it. He waited for five minutes. Then Fairleigh came out and got into his car and started off. Spike switched on his engine. He followed well in the rear, until it was apparent that the lawyer was merely retracing the route he had come. Spike turned and went roaring back to the little town on the edge of the Reservation.

As his car turned down the rough, rutted street, it bucked, backfired, gave several convulsive jerks, died—directly in front of the little farm bungalow. He got out and raised the hood, took a wrench from the tool box, and gave a few desultory pokes at the ailing engine. Then he scowled and flung the wrench from him in disgust. He looked about, scanned the horizon. As his eye fell upon the bungalow he seemed to have an idea. He opened the front gate, repelled the advances of an over affectionate dog and knocked on the door. A pleasant, comfortable gray-haired woman opened it and listened sympathetically to the story of his misfortunes.

"Why sure, Mister," she said, "you're welcome to a wrench if we got one. My husband ain't here just now, but Eddy mebby could help you out. He's right handy around machinery. He's round by the barn now."

She came out onto the tiny stoop and called, and presently the boy appeared, a stocky well built lad with a pleasant, grinning face.

"Eddy, the gentleman's car's broke and his wrench is too big. See if you can fetch one of those smaller ones we used to carry in the back of the Ford."

The boy disappeared in the direction of the barn. He returned in a few minutes with a wrench and followed Spike out to the car. He watched with interest while Spike set to work, peering, poking under the engine hood.

"What's wrong?" he inquired, "fuel pump?"

Spike looked up, a smudge of grease on his nose. "No—ah—I don't think so. It's—it's the steering gear."

The lad giggled. "Then you're a-lookin' on the wrong side, Mister. Steering gear's over here." He indicated the opposite side of the engine.

"Oh—ah—yes, so it is." Spike strove valiantly to cover his confusion, as he raised the opposite side of the hood, and engaged in more desultory pokings under the inquisitive gaze of the boy.

"How do you like these new synchro-mesh transmission gears Cadillac's got this year?" the boy inquired as he stood off and admired the stream lines of the car. "They make the shift any easier?"

"Oh—much easier, much, very much easier."

"Yeah, but don't you think with a two-plate clutch you—"

Spike held up an admonitory hand and straightened his bent back. "Listen sonny," he said, "just what are you? A professional . . ."

FAIRLEIGH arrived at his Nassau street office at three o'clock and immediately called his secretary into his private office.

It was a bit after four when a young man of lazy well-being slouched into the outer office of Schwab, Fairleigh & Morrison and cast an enchanting smile at the telephone operator.

"I want to see Mr. Morrison," he said.

"Mr. Morrison's out of town. He's gone to Europe." She smiled.

"In that case," he said, "I won't wait." He sat down, inched his chair a bit closer to the switchboard, gazed in quizzical speculation at the operator. She was pretty and she was paying more attention to the audacious stranger than to the lights flashing on the board.

"You know," he said, and his voice had a low, confidential tone, "your face seems awfully familiar. Haven't I seen you some place before?"

She giggled. "Oh, that's what you tell all the girls."

"No, but really I mean it. Haven't I . . ."

They had dinner together at a little restaurant on a side street in the Thirties, a discreet, quiet little restaurant with no orchestra or dancing. The girl was a bit disappointed.

"Oh, I like to talk better," the young man protested. "I like serious things—you know like politics and what you read in the newspapers, and problems like—well, like unemployment and crime. Now you take, for instance, this Crossley crime case in the newspapers. . . ."

A LATE moon rose over the horizon, bathed Sark Island in silver, washed it with irridescent waves. Spike stretched himself gratefully in the porch swing and lit a pipe, while Pug cleared away the remnants of a late supper. It had been almost ten before he had gotten back to the island.

"Thank God," he said, "she lived in Jamaica and not the Bronx."

"Who's she?"

"A dame I picked up."

"Ain't you got enough dames on your hands without goin' out and huntin' trouble?"

"Maybe I've got too many. How's she today?" He sobered suddenly and nodded in the direction of the upper room.

"Same, only maybe a little quieter. Mrs. Parsons says she ain't got so much fever as she did yesterday."

"Talk any?"

"Not much and not so's you could understand anything."

For a moment Spike was thoughtful. "Sit down, Pug. I've got to get things off my chest."

He told the story of his two days' adventures. His interview with Herschman and R. Montgomery Tracy, the reports, the two hours he had spent in the Crossley library.

"I pretended I had a sleeping hangover. That was a lot of crap, of course. I told Richard I had slept through it all there in the library. I wanted to get away to follow Fairleigh. I didn't like the way he acted. I think he was lying. I think he knows a hell of a lot more about old Crossley and the Granddaughter than he lets on. So I followed him after he left. He didn't know it, of course. He drove out to a little town west of the Forestry Reservation in Jersey. Stayed about five minutes in a house on the edge of town and then beat it back to New York. I stuck around." He paused and pulled meditatively at his pipe.

"What did you find out?" Pug prompted.

"Nothing much. Family living there by the name of Polk. A Mr. and Mrs. Polk and their nephew. I found most of it out from the boy. I managed to strike up a conversation with him. Pretended my car was busted and he stuck around while I tinkered with it. He said Fairleigh was 'Oh, just a man Uncle Henry has some business with.' He didn't seem to know just what the business was, but he said Fairleigh came out every two or three months. Never stayed long though.

"After that I went back to town and up to Fairleigh's office. I played the dumb cluck and took the telephone operator out to dinner. Telephone operators always know things."

"Well—did she?"

Spike paused, took a long pull at his pipe.

"She said that about two o'clock last Monday afternoon, Linda Crossley phoned and asked to speak to Fairleigh's private secretary. The secretary was out. Then she asked to speak to Fairleigh himself. When they told her he would be out of town for two weeks she had hysterics over the telephone."

There was a short silence, both of them musing on the implications of this revelation. Then Spike spoke. "Go upstairs and bring down her hand bag. It's in the bureau drawer in her room."

In a few minutes Pug was back with the bag—a plain black envelope, its fine seal leather showing the effects of rain and mud. They had opened it that first night, searching for a card, a bank book, a letter, something that would identify the wild, sodden creature who had stumbled over the doorsill. But there had been nothing helpful. A vanity case, about ten dollars in bills and coin, a few other inconsequential items that are to be found in every woman's purse. The only thing unusual was a tiny square steel box. But it had offered no initial, no address, no hint of identity, so they had paid little attention to it.

Now Spike reached into the purse and brought it out, held it in the palm of his hand. His eyes met Pug's and they were troubled. He pressed a tiny spring at the side, just as he had seen other tiny springs pressed that morning in the Crossley library. The lid flew open. He brought his flash to play on it, the better to reveal what was inside. He and Pug bent closer.

"Funny," Spike said, "how it keeps its color all these years."

It was a stamp . . . a three-masted sailing ship . . . a Latin motto . . . black on deep magneta. . . . It was the most valuable stamp in the world —the British Guiana, one cent, 1856.

CHAPTER X

SPIKE flung himself into a chair and gazed out over the bay, his brows twisted in a troubled scowl. Finally he turned to Pug.

"Well, what do *you* think?"

"Same as you. Only I ain't afraid to admit it."

"What should we do about it?"

"Better phone up your brother and tell him."

"You mean throw her to the lions—eh?"

"Well, I could think of other things to call your brother besides a bunch o' lions, but I guess that's what it amounts to."

"You *are* a louse, Pug."

"Maybe," Pug agreed without rancour. "But then again, I ain't no damn fool."

"And I am?"

Pug nodded, rose and began clearing away the breakfast dishes from the wicker porch table. At the door leading into the house he paused. "But then," he added slowly, "there's worse things than bein' a damn fool."

Spike left the veranda and went for a walk along the smooth, sandy beach. One hand held his pipe, the other was jammed into his pocket fingering a small square steel box. He had put it there last night after he had taken it from the woman's purse. Now he was tempted to hurl it out into the low, whitecaps that curled up the beach. They would wash it away, carry it out to sea, bury it in sand Perhaps that would be best. Still—It was not alone the thought of $32,500 that stayed his hand.

He left the beach and wandered inland, followed the meanderings of a tiny creek through woods and meadow. It was almost noon before he returned to the house. Pug met him at the door.

"Mrs. Parsons says to come up quick. She's talkin' —sense, you know. She's conscious."

Upstairs as Spike stepped over the threshold it seemed a different room from the one he had left in the gray, chill dawn three days before. The fitful eerie shadows of flickering lamplight were gone, and the place was bathed in sunlight. The air too was different. It was as if a haunted spirit, babbling in delirium had at last found refuge in consciousness.

She lay now in the bed, quietly, her eyes closed, her hand resting in Mrs. Parsons'. She looked infinitely worn and beaten, and yet strangely enough she seemed at peace, like one who ceases to struggle and surrenders, regardless of what the surrender may entail.

AS SPIKE approached the bed her eyes opened. She looked at Mrs. Parsons and a faint, weak smile curved her lips. She spoke, almost in a whisper.

"You are so—kind. Who—"

Mrs. Parsons leaned over and brushed the tangled black hair off the brow. "Don't fret yourself with questions now," she said gently. "Wait till you're feeling a bit stronger."

"But—but I want to know who—where—"

"I'm Mrs. Parsons and you're in Mr. Tracy's house on Sark Island, and you've been mighty sick for five or six days now, and we've been looking after you. This here's Mr. Tracy."

Spike drew up a chair and sat down beside the bed. She shifted her eyes slowly, looked at him, said nothing.

"You came Monday night," Mrs. Parsons went on. "You must have lost your way in the storm."

"The storm . . ." The woman echoed the word weakly. "Oh yes—the rain and the wind—and before that Saugus. . . ." She seemed to be laboring to remember and the effort was exhausting. She closed her eyes.

"Just you rest a while now," Mrs. Parsons commanded gently. She motioned Spike out of the room and lowered the curtain that the light might not shine in the woman's eyes. Later she took up some food, rich meat broth and an egg whipped up in milk. In the early afternoon, soon after lunch she summoned Spike once more. She met him outside the upstairs room and closed the door softly behind her as she stepped into the hall.

"She's lots better," she said in a low voice. "I've explained as much as I could to her and she insists on seeing you."

"Did you—did she say anything about—about what I showed you in the paper?"

Mrs. Parsons shook her head.

When Spike entered the room for the second time that day, the woman was lying propped up on pillows. Her eyes were open and they met his steadily as he sat down beside her. Her voice was still weak but even.

"Mrs. Parsons has told me how very kind you've been," she began. "I'm grateful and I'm sorry I've been such a trouble to you."

Spike tried to brush away her protests of gratitude.

"I feel much stronger now and I don't want to trespass on your kindness. I think by tomorrow I'll be able to go—" She paused. It was as if she could find no word with which to finish the sentence, as if the realization had suddenly come to her. For a moment a sort of panic seemed to lurk in her eyes. Then once more she was in command of herself. She went on, but not quite so steadily.

"I have a friend—and if you will call him by telephone, he will come here tomorrow—and get me."

"But you're much too weak yet," Spike assured her. "And anyway there's no question of 'trouble' or 'trespass.' Forget about everything except just resting quietly and getting back your strength."

"No—no, I must see my friend. You must call him for me. I must go—away from here."

"I couldn't allow it. You've been desperately ill. Mrs. Parsons has told you that. You must stay here, in this bed, in this room for a week, several weeks."

"No—I must go—tomorrow." She was getting tired and she closed her eyes wearily.

Spike looked at her thoughtfully for a few moments, hesitated, then spoke.

"But why," he said softly, "must you go away from here—tomorrow?"

She opened her eyes and returned his steady gaze. "Because you have been kind, and if I stay I will bring you—trouble."

"I told you there was no question of 'trouble.'"

"I don't mean that kind—inconvenience. I mean —*real* trouble. Please—call my friend. Tell him Linda wants him. Ask him—to come."

"Very well," he said rising. "What's his name and how shall I get in touch with him?"

"He's in the telephone book—the Manhattan book. His name is Koenig. Kurt Koenig."

CHAPTER XI

'IT WAS," said the large lady with the bosom as she peered into the cavernous depths of her hand bag, "very romantic. You see, my grandfather was living in Allegheney at the time and my grandmother—but, of course, she wasn't my grandmother yet. She was just plain Hattie Beamis—well, she was living back in Medbury, Mass., and my grandfather wrote to her and said that if she didn't come west right away and marry him, he'd jump in the river and drown himself, but the letter got lost and my grandmother didn't get it till three years after they were married—my grandfather didn't jump in the river after all—and then it turned up when they were living in Chillecothe—my grandfather ran a feed store there—and of course they had a big laugh over it and my grandmother always kept it, and me being her namesake she handed it on down to me when she died along with her Battenburg tablecloth and her crocheted bedspreads, and I never thought much about it till the other day Mr. Simpson—he's in business with my husband up in Yonkers, they're in the plumbing business—well, I happened to be telling Mr. Simpson about it and he says that only the other day he was reading in the paper about just such a letter, you know, somebody's grandfather and grandmother, and they took it down to a stamp dealer and he looked at the stamp on the envelope and said it was worth twelve hundred dollars, so—"

This monologue carried on without pause or punctuation suddenly ended with a triumphant "There!" as the large lady with the bosom at last managed to extricate an old and yellowed envelope from the debris of her handbag.

"There!" she repeated, and handed the envelope over to the little round man behind the counter. On her face was the broad satisfied smile of one who has just engineered a remarkable coup.

The little round man picked up the envelope, looked at the stamp and then handed it back to her.

"It's the 1851, three-cent, dull red, type I. It is worth—"

He paused slightly and the bosom of the large lady heaved with expectation.

"It is worth twenty-five cents."

The large lady gasped and sputtered. "But—but Mr. Simpson said—"

"This is a poor specimen and on cover. Unused this variety sells for around $3.50."

"But—but it's very old. Mr. Simpson—"

"It is not the age that counts, it is the rarity."

"But 1851—that's very old."

"But very ordinary. There are hundreds of that issue still in existence."

"But Mr. Simpson said—" She was indignant now.

"Pardon me, madam, but if you would rather take the word of a plumber instead of a stamp dealer, perhaps you had better offer this for sale to Mr. Simpson himself."

The large lady sailed out, wrath fighting with disappointment. Mr. Simpson had said . . .

The little round man sighed in relief and approached the tall, blondish young man who for almost half an hour had been consulting the catalog at the other end of the counter. For a moment the young man let the stamp dealer look him square in the face, before he spoke. There was no flicker of recognition in Koenig's eyes. Young gentlemen who slouch in easy chairs with their faces half-hidden in their hands in dimly lighted libraries are not easily identified later.

"I have a collection here," the young man explained somewhat apologetically. "Not a very valuable one, but it belongs to my young nephew and I thought I'd like to get an estimate on it."

Koenig smiled as he picked up the grubby, battered little album. "You are not a collector yourself?" he asked.

The young man shook his head.

"I did not think so. The real collector is not interested in price. Price is nothing. It is the thrill of owning, of having, of discovering." There was subtle reproof although his tone was gentle. He turned the pages of the album, smiled with kindly tolerance at the miscellaneous collection.

"He likes air mails, I see."

"Yes, they're his passion. By the way, there's

some new Russian air mail stamp he's awfully keen about. If you've got it, I'll take one and—" He broke off.

Koenig was staring. His little fat hands holding the album trembled slightly. For a moment he said nothing. Just looked at the page before him. When he spoke his voice seemed to stick in his throat.

"Your nephew—he—where—where did he get that one?" His finger pointed at a stamp—black on magenta, the rough design of a sailing ship, a Latin inscription.

"Oh that," said the young man lightly. "That one I put there myself, today. It was—given to me."

"Given—to you? Who—who?" His voice rose fiercely, anxiously.

Suddenly the young man's manner changed. He stood facing the stamp dealer now, eyeing him steadily. Behind him the door to the shop was half ajar. He kicked it shut with his foot, but still facing Koenig, he turned the key, put it in his pocket. Then he approached the little round man.

"A woman gave it to me," he said quietly.

"A woman? Lind—" Koenig broke off abruptly,

realizing too late his involuntary betrayal. A look of horror and fear crept into his eyes.

Spike nodded. "Yes, Linda. Linda Crossley. I've come to take you to her."

CHAPTER XII

BACK in the quiet room again with the evening sun slanting through the western windows, and the woman on the bed sleeping, but quietly now. No troubled frenzy of delirium. No terrorized recoil from the menacing phantoms of fever.

At the foot of the bed stood two men—Spike and Koenig, waiting. And as they waited they continued their watchful scrutiny of each other. From that moment, three hours before when they had faced each other over the counter, and that cry, half fear, half joy had burst from the lips of the stamp dealer, distrust had sprung up between them.

They had said little to each other. It was as if each feared the most casual conversation. They had gone into the back of the shop where Koenig had his private apartment, and very briefly Spike had related the events of that stormy Monday night when Linda Crossley had first stumbled across his threshold. Now they waited. The woman slept quietly. Once Mrs. Parsons came in to make sure that nothing was needed. Koenig sat on a chair beside the bed, and in the gaze that he turned on the figure under the white counterpane there was deep affection and anxious concern.

At last she stirred. He grew tense, leaned forward, touched her hand. She opened her eyes and saw him. His arms were suddenly around her, and she was sobbing softly, quietly, like a weary child who has at last reached a safe haven.

Spike went to the window and for a long time stared out into the dying day, his back to the two figures at the bedside. He could hear them murmuring—gentle, comforting words from Koenig; soft sobbing syllables from the woman. Presently she lay back against the pillows, her hand in Koenig's. She closed her eyes, rested gratefully from emotion. Then she began to speak, slowly with long pauses between sentences as if rallying her pitiful strength.

"I must tell you—what happened. You and the gentleman over there. You must know—and he has a right to know. He has been good—so good to me." She paused, then went on.

"It was that night—I don't remember exactly. It was so long ago—and I have lost track of time. The maids had gone out and we were alone in the house—he and I. I went out for a walk in the park. I was out a long time—I don't know how long, but it was a long time. It was late when I came back. I went by the library door and it was open. I could see him. He was—"

SHE broke off, covered her eyes with the back of her hand, pressing in hard as if to shut out a memory or horror.

"He was—I thought he was—asleep. There was only the reading light on the desk and it was dim. His head was forward on his arms. And one arm was stretched out—and I could see—in his hand the little box—open. It was—it was a stamp—a very valuable one, the most valuable in the world, and I thought if I could steal it from him—I could make him—"

She broke off again. But now she seemed to grow strong. She opened her eyes and looked into Koenig's. "I thought I could use it—could make him tell me—something I wanted to know. So I took it. I stole it."

Her voice rose almost to shrill defiance. "I left the house and I spent the night at a hotel. I didn't use my own name. I thought he might try to find me. I was going to hide it where no one would know but me. And then I was going to force him to tell me—tell me what he's kept from me, what I *must* know if I'm to go on living—what I've got to know. And then the next day before I had decided just what I was going to do—I saw—it—in the papers."

Her voice had sunk away again into a whisper. A slight tremor seemed to shake Koenig, but it was a tremor of tension relieved.

She went on. "I suddenly realized—what people would think. I was afraid. I tried to get hold of Mr. Fairleigh. Then I seemed to lose my head. I—thought of Saugus. I remembered what that woman had told me. You said it was silly. I guess it was. I don't know. I can't remember clearly. I know I got on a train but when I got to Saugus I went crazy. I thought I must get away. There was an island. I could see it from the mainland, and a man with a ferry. He brought me over. There was a storm—rain, wind. I wandered around—I don't remember—I—that's all—"

THE little strength she had was exhausted, drained from her. Her hand lay weak and helpless in Koenig's. Her eyes were closed. She seemed like one dead.

But presently she opened her eyes again, looked up at Koenig.

"Do you—" she whispered. "Do you—believe me? Do you believe—he was already—dead—when I went in there—to him?"

"Liebling!" In the quaint old endearment there was reassurance, passionate, tender. She smiled faintly and her fingers pressed his.

A half hour later downstairs in the library the two men faced each other.

"You did not tell her," said Koenig and his voice was hard, "you did not tell her—you believe her?"

Spike gave no answer. His eyes faltered, fell before the accusing gaze of the other man.

"Do you?" Koenig persisted. "Do you believe her?"

"I—I don't know."

Koenig was thoughtful. Then he spoke again in the same guarded tone. "Did not the papers say that the police had searched this island?"

Spike nodded.

"Did you see the police officers when they were here?"

"Yes."

"Then how—"

"I lied to them."

A pause.

"Why—why did you lie to them?"

"Because," Spike said quietly and this time his eyes met Koenig's squarely, "because I'm a damn fool."

Koenig's round face broke into a grin, and tiny wrinkles sprayed out from his smiling eyes. In some strange fashion the barrier of distrust between them seemed suddenly to melt away.

"Good!" he said warmly. "So am I a damn fool. We shall get along, my friend."

CHAPTER XIII

"I THINK," said Spike, "she should stay here. Try and persuade her."

"She must stay," Koenig agreed. "I shall command her and she will do as I say. In the first place she is too weak to be moved, and in the second place—" He broke off, unwilling to complete the sentence.

"I know. The police. . . ."

They smoked for a while in silence, sprawled at ease in wicker porch chairs, and for the first time Spike had an opportunity really to study his guest.

Koenig looked forty-five, perhaps fifty, but an exceedingly well-preserved fifty. His skin was firm and rosy, and he had, even in repose, a vigorous liveliness. There was, too, about him a sartorial elegance that somehow seemed incongruous. His clothes were obviously the product of an excellent tailor, and there was quiet taste in tie and socks and shirt. His shoes only were a discordant note. They were comfortably old, looked as if they had been made by a village cobbler, and they needed a shine. Spike noted with an inward gleam of amusement that the heels were slightly high, as if their wearer had sought thus to mitigate Nature's shortcomings in the matter of height.

Presently Spike took up the conversation again.

"Tell me something about Crossley. Who do you think might have . . ."

Koenig shook his head. "I can imagine no one. . . ."

"Then he was one of those lovable old gentlemen without enemies?"

"Oh, I would not exactly say that. He had no enemies that I know of, but he was not—lovable."

Spike flung away a half-smoked cigar and reached for the more familiar cigarette.

"You know, Koenig, I'm terribly in the dark, and I feel that I am—that I have a right to a little enlightenment. More than a mere right. If Linda Crossley is to stay here, I think I could hold up my end of it a bit better if I knew a little more about her—and old Crossley."

Koenig was thoughtful for a moment. "Yes," he said, "you're right. Perhaps I should tell you."

His cigar had gone out and Spike held out his lighter. In the glow of the tiny flame he could see that Koenig's face was sober and troubled.

"I have known Prentice Crossley for three years," the stamp dealer began at last. He spoke with just enough of an accent to lend a certain charm to his voice. "I met him shortly after I came to this country the second time. I lived in America many years ago before the War. I was in business here, textile importing. After the War I remained in Germany. I made money, not a lot, but when I had enough for comfort I quit. I thought I would travel. I had always liked New York so I came back here. It was just about the time of the International Stamp Exhibition. I had always been interested in stamps and knew a lot about them. I even had a small collection of my own. I started it when I was just a boy in school in Munich. I collect 'howlers.'"

"'Howlers?'"

"Stamps with crazy mistakes in them—you know, ships with their flags blowing against the wind, and animals with their anatomy against Nature.

"Crossley owned at that time a whole pane of the twenty-four-cent U.S. air mails with the airplane printed upside down in the middle of the stamp. These are among the most valuable 'howlers' in the world today. Of course, we would never think of actually calling them 'howlers.' They are much too grand. But just the same that is what they are, and I wanted to see them when I went to the stamp exhibit. I knew that Crossley had some of them, so I went to his exhibit. He was there and we got to talking. That's how we first met. Stamps are like babies and dogs. They are an open sesame to conversation.

"LATER I decided to settle down in New York—to make a business of what had formerly been a hobby, so I set up a stamp shop, and in the course of the last three years my work has kept me in frequent touch with Prentice Crossley."

He paused again letting his thoughts drift back silently over that association.

"Three years," he repeated, "and yet I can tell you so little about him. In all that time I do not think we ever talked about anything but stamps. His health was very bad and it was difficult for him to get about, so I usually went to his house when he summoned me. Once or twice a month, sometimes oftener. He used me principally as his agent at stamp auctions, and through my European connections I was able to arrange certain trades for him with German and French collectors.

"He was not—not exactly— Well, what is the use of beating about the bush just because he is dead. He was not a pleasant man in any way, my friend. He was harsh and stubborn and he had an implacable belief in his own rightness in everything. For fifteen years he has lived shut up in that house with not another human interest in his life but his stamps. They were an obsession with him, a mania. He cared for nothing else on earth. He pored over them like a miser with his money bags. If he had no enemies, at least no enemies capable of murdering him, neither had he any friends."

"What about this fellow Watson? I understand he and Crossley made occasional trades."

"They did. And their meetings were like an armed truce. There was a bitter feud between them."

"How'd it start?"

"Oh, that was years before I knew either of them. Watson was not a collector then. He didn't know a thing about stamps. His people came from Lockport, New York, and one day in an old trunk be-

longing to his mother, he found a letter written from Lockport in 1846. That was before federal postage was adopted in this country and each individual post office used to issue its own stamps. This one from Lockport happens to be very valuable. I think it is catalogued now at something like eight or ten thousand dollars. Watson, because he knew Crossley was a collector, took it to him and asked him what it was worth. Crossley realized its value, of course, but he pretended that it was not worth much, and offered to buy it for ten dollars, and Watson let it go. Afterward Watson found out the real value of the stamp.

"That incident started him studying stamps, hoping that some day he would get a chance to get back at Crossley. Then he got genuinely interested, started collecting himself. Now he is almost as bad as Crossley was. He has a remarkable collection. He came into money about ten years ago, I understand, and has been able to indulge his taste for valuable stamps. He and Crossley were the two greatest rivals in this country in the collection of rarities. And they hated each other like poison."

"And I suppose," Spike said, "Crossley had a number that Watson wanted."

"He would have given his eye-teeth, as you say, for the British Guiana one cent. And, of course, he wanted back the Lockport 1846. On the other hand, he had the one- and two-penny Mauritius 'post office' on cover, worth something like $50,000. Crossley would have given *his* eye-teeth for that."

"And there were, I suppose, others in the Crossley collection that Watson coveted?"

"Many of them. The nine-kreuzer Baden, 1861; the six-real Spanish with the color error; the 1849 French 'tete-beche'—to mention just a few."

"All of which," Spike remarked quietly, "are now missing. Does that suggest nothing to you, Koenig?"

Koenig turned on him a face that was slightly puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"I should think it would be plain enough."

"Are you suggesting that Watson—" Suddenly light seemed to dawn. The puzzled expression disappeared and he laughed.

"No, no, my friend, you are wrong there if you are thinking that Watson murdered Crossley and took his stamps."

"Why?" Spike challenged.

"I am afraid you do not understand about these great stamp rarities. They are all known, catalogued, kept track of by dealers and other collectors all over the world. They know just who owns which and what. Any change of ownership is published in a hundred philatelic magazines from New York to Pekin. It would be safer, far safer to steal the Kohinoor than to steal a famous stamp. The Kohinoor could be cut up and sold in unrecognizable pieces. You can steal money and bonds and jewels and profit by it. But not stamps. And remember that Watson is a collector and knows all this."

Spike was thoughtful and a bit dashed. "But couldn't—No, of course not. You're right. I never thought of it that way." He reached for another cigarette and lit it from the glowing butt he held in his hand. For a while the two men smoked in silence.

"How about the granddaughter? You haven't told me about her."

"I know," Koenig said quietly.

"You seem to—ah—to be on a bit more intimate terms with her than with the old man."

"Yes, she is very dear to me, and she trusts me."

"I could see that."

"I have been her friend. Almost the only friend she has had for so long."

"Her grandfather was not her—friend?"

"He was her—" He broke off, hesitated. "But perhaps I had better tell you from the beginning. I used to see her sometimes when I first went to Crossley's house. He depended on her a lot. She was a sort of secretary to him, wrote letters for him, made telephone calls. She was so lovely to look at. I found myself looking at her when I should have been looking at stamps. And so sad. It touched my heart. Her eyes were so sad.

"I tried to lighten them, to bring a little pleasantness into her life. Sometimes after I was through with Crossley I would linger in the drawing room across from the library and talk to her. We grew to be friends. She told me how lonely her life was, how empty, shut up with the old man. He was very demanding. He wanted her constant attention. He cared for her, I suppose, in his selfish, strange way, but her life with him was no life for a girl."

"Girl? She seems hardly that."

"I know. She is a woman really. She is thirty-four, but I always seem to think of her as—just nineteen." Koenig's voice had softened as he talked of Linda Crossley. It was infinitely tender, not with the tenderness of a lover, but with the deeper, more protecting tenderness of a father.

"You knew her when she was—just nineteen?"

"No. I have known her only three years."

"Has she always lived there in that gloomy old house with her grandfather?"

"Always. Her parents were killed in a railroad accident when she was a baby."

"Had she no other friends besides you?"

"A few acquaintances, yes. But no real friends. Friendship, you know, does not thrive on gloom and harsh, decaying age. He discouraged it. He was too selfish to wish for her any world of her own. He ruined her life."

Koenig spoke the damning accusation quietly without rancour—a simple, hard statement of fact.

"Tell me something," Spike said, "something I've been wondering about ever since this afternoon when she talked to us. She said something about a woman. She said, 'I remembered Saugus and what that woman had told me.'" He paused and tamped out his cigarette. "What did she mean? Who is 'that woman?'" He sensed rather than actually saw a sudden stiffening in Koenig. There was a long pause before Koenig answered, and when he spoke his voice was low, restrained, as if he were suddenly on guard against something.

"That I cannot tell you."

"You mean you don't know?"

"I mean—I cannot tell you."

Spike considered this refusal in silence for a few minutes. Then he spoke again.

"But perhaps you can explain this: she kept repeating 'what I must know,' 'what I've *got* to know if I'm to go on.' Something her grandfather knew, some information he had that she wanted. What was it?"

Koenig's cigar had gone out again and he was sitting, staring now into the darkness. He did not look at Spike as he answered. "That too, my friend, I cannot tell you."

"Why?"

Another long pause.

"Because it is not mine to tell. It is—hers."

"I see." Spike hesitated. Then: "Had it—anything to do with that clause in Crossley's will?"

"I have never seen Crossley's will. What did it say?"

"Oh, something about putting upon Fairleigh the task of—I think the exact words were, 'saving her from the consequences of her own indiscretions.'"

Koenig made no answer.

"Well?" Spike said at last.

"Well what?"

"I mean, has that clause in the will anything to do with this other thing that Linda Crossley must know?"

"I am sure," Koenig replied, "that I am not in a position to know what was in Prentice Crossley's mind when he wrote his will."

This was plainly an evasion, but Spike did not feel that he could press the point further. Instead he picked up the new lead inadvertently suggested by Koenig.

"How about Fairleigh? Do you know him."

"No, I have never met him." Koenig tossed away his dead cigar and rose. "I have never even seen him," he added, "but I dislike him extremely."

"Why?"

"Because he is a man of honor."

"Aren't you?"

"No—thank God."

"But you—keep confidences?"

"I have my own code."

His round face broke into a gentle smile as he looked down at the younger man. "It is a strange code, perhaps, but—" He paused, then shook his head. "No, it is too late now to go into that tonight. Some other time perhaps. Good-night."

CHAPTER XIV

ON Monday Spike went into New York. He was obsessed by a restlessness for which he could not entirely account. Perhaps, he argued, he needed diversion.

Monday night he went to a show alone. There was a fight at the Garden on Tuesday. He tried to think of a possible companion, but in his strange, erratic frame of mind he could find no one who quite fitted. Again he went alone. He left before it was half over. On the way home he stopped in at a bar and had a drink and bought an early edition of the Wednesday morning *Tribune*.

He leaned up against the counter and sipped his drink and scanned the paper. The Crossley murder no longer rated front page space. It was inside now, ignominously rubbing shoulders with the advertisements. And just a couple of sticks at that, full of the things which Inspector Herschman and District Attorney Tracy usually said when they had nothing to say.

Spike stuck the paper in his pocket and called for another drink . . . and another. . . . A taxi driver took him home, put him to bed. It was ten the next morning before he wakened. His head ached and his mouth felt furry, but a cold shower banished these slight ill effects of the previous night's indulgence. It would not, however, banish that vague but persistent restlessness.

He dressed, fixed himself coffee and toast on the kitchen table. After breakfast he lit a cigarette and slumped down into an easy chair. So what now?

He didn't know. His gaze wandered about the

room. The paper he had bought the night before was lying, folded and crumpled just where it had fallen from his pocket as he was assisted to bed by the obliging taxi driver. He picked it up, yawned and turned pages. Old stuff. What he needed was tomorrow's news. He had already read today's news last night. Modern tempo was confusing.

His eyes strayed down a column. He read in a desultory way, skipping, skimming.

It was on the fourth inside page, dwarfed beside a seven-column automobile ad that he found it. Or perhaps it would be better to say chanced upon it. For it was just that—chance. And it was only the last line that really caught his attention. But after he had seen that last line, he went back and read carefully from the beginning.

"Mrs. Deborah Ealing of 143 West 110th St. was found dead in her apartment last night with a stab wound in her back. She had apparently been dead some hours. No property was missing and nothing was disturbed in the apartment. The apartment house is near the Spanish district and police expressed the view that the killing was part of a vendetta which has been raging in that district for some weeks. The body of the woman was discovered by her daughter, Maysie Ealing, 33, when she came home from work late Tuesday evening. The daughter is employed—"

Spike thrust the paper from him and grabbed the directory, looked up a number and reached for the telephone.

"H'ya baby," he said when presently there came a response. His voice was as vapid as his words. "Remember me? You know, the guy you were out to dinner with the other night. . . . Oh yeah, I know. Don't rub it in. I'm just one of a crowd. . . . Come on now, dearie, no wise cracks. You know I can't take it. . . ."

THE conversation drifted on. There was some talk of a date. There were frequent long waits.

The party at the other end was apparently interrupted. It was after one of these long waits that he sprang it—oh so casually, as if it had just popped into his head.

"Say, did you read the paper this morning? You're right in the news, aren't you? . . . I bet you got about ten cops hanging round you down there, and you're giving them all the eye, aren't you? . . . Oh, she did? . . . Well, I wouldn't think she would be . . ."

At last he laid the telephone back in place and snatched up the paper once more, read the final unfinished sentence.

"The daughter is employed by the Nassau street law firm of Schwab, Fairleigh and Morrison."

He rose and reached for his coat. There was a decisive set to his jaw. He was thinking of what the telephone operator had just told him.

". . . She's Mr. Fairleigh's private secretary. She's only been working here six months. . . ."

He was remembering too what she had told him that evening he had taken her out to dinner.

". . . and on Monday afternoon just when it was all over the papers about him being killed, Miss Crossley calls up and wants to speak to Fairleigh's private secretary, a dame named Ealing, and when I says, 'Miss Ealing's out,' she says . . ."

CHAPTER XV

THE headlines of the afternoon papers leaped up at the world in black glaring type.

EALING KILLING LINKED
WITH CROSSLEY MURDER

"The murder of Mrs. Deborah Ealing, of 143 West 110th St., erroneously reported at first as a Spanish vendetta killing, is now being definitely linked by the police with the murder of Prentice Crossley, wealthy stamp dealer and . . ."

Spike skipped the rest of the lead, his eyes jumping quickly down the page until he found the paragraphs he was seeking.

"The report of the medical examiner places the time of death 'sometime after noon Tuesday.' The murder weapon was a bayonet with a triangular blade containing tiny notches, and is exactly like that used in the killing of Prentice Crossley. It was found wiped clean, and hanging with some other war relics, a German and an American helmet, on the wall of the back hall. Maysie Ealing, the daughter, says that it was a war souvenir sent to them by her brother who was killed in France, and always hung in that particular spot.

"Rigor mortis had already set in by the time the medical examiner was summoned, and it was not discovered until some hours after the body was taken to the morgue, that the fingers of the right hand clutched a tiny piece of paper. This has been definitely identified by Jason Fream of the Acme Stamp Company and Kurt Koenig, two of the stamp experts originally called in by the police in the Crossley case, as the six-real Spanish issue of 1851, valued at $12,500, which was stolen from the Crossley collection the night Crossley was murdered."

CHAPTER XVI

NUMBER 143 West 110th St. was an old building, but there was none of the crumbling sordidness of the tenement about it. Its halls were dark but clean. Its five stories housed ten families. This much could be ascertained from the mail boxes in the vestibule. The Ealing apartment was on the third floor in the front.

Spike mounted the stairs. Before the door leading to the third floor front he paused a moment before knocking. His brows were knit in heavy lines of indecision. It was as if he were trying to make up his mind about something, as if he could not quite bring himself to do what he was about to do. Finally he raised his hand and knocked. Number 143 boasted no such elegancies as electric bells.

For a long time there was no answer. He knocked again. Presently the door was opened by a woman. She was middle-aged and comfortably plump with a scrubbed, red peasant face and a coronet of heavy blonde hair. She eyed the visitor hostilely and demanded his business in a heavy Swedish accent.

"Miss Ealing," he explained, "I want to see her."

"Miss Ealing can't see nobody. She iss sick. Her modder iss just dead."

She pushed the door to but Spike caught it before it slammed.

"I quite understand the circumstances," he said in a voice politely hushed, suavely considerate of the presence of grief and death. "But I must insist on seeing Miss Ealing. I'm—I'm from the district attorney's office."

At the reference to the district attorney, the woman's hostility increased, but she ceased to push the door.

"But she vas dere all morning," she protested. "You asking her questions all morning and now she iss tired."

"I know. I'm sorry, really. I wish I might spare her the distress of further intrusion, but it can't be helped. I shan't keep her long."

The woman melted a little. She was uncertain just how to deal with this gentle but firm gentleman. He wasn't like those others, those heavy-jawed fellows who had come with the policeman in uniform that first night when Maysie Ealing had rushed screaming into the hall. This one was different.

She hesitated, looked at him suspiciously and finally gave in. She motioned him to enter and she closed the door behind him.

"I tell her," she said. "You wait. She iss lying down now."

When she had gone Spike had a chance to look about him. He was standing in a little hallway, one end of which led into the living-room. The woman had disappeared through a door at the back leading evidently to another room in the rear. His eyes, gradually getting used to the dim light, travelled about the tiny passageway. There was an old-fashioned hat rack and umbrella stand, a telephone desk without a telephone, nothing of note. Nothing, that is, except the sinister decorations of the wall immediately facing the entrance door.

There were two helmets, the shallow, wide one of the doughboys of 1917-18, the deep, clumsy one of the German soldiers. They were hanging side by side in strange fraternization, mute witnesses of the ultimate emptiness of hate. Beneath was a row of tacks driven into the wall at intervals of two or three inches, forming a little shelf about twelve inches long. It was empty now, but Spike noted it carefully. That would be where the dagger-bayonet was found.

He stepped quietly into the front room. It was small and shiny with hard, varnished oak woodwork. The furniture was worn, but there was no spot of dust showing, and the curtains were crisply clean. There were pots of green plants at the windows and in one corner a couch with an old fashioned afghan crocheted in bright colors. It was a room of no particular taste or period, and yet somehow it managed to convey a feeling of homely comfort.

Spike looked about him and wondered where it had happened—where the old lady had sat—in what chair she had been when the daughter had found her. But the room gave back no answer.

He crossed to the opposite wall and surveyed a group of family photographs. Babies, indistinguishable as to sex or disposition. A sturdy lad of possibly twelve, and a little girl of eight or ten, playing with a dog. The girl again in a fancy dress costume. Another one of the boy, a bit older this one, probably just entering high school.

And then there was the large picture apart from the others. The boy grown into a young man in a corporal's uniform, a pleasant looking young man, with frank, humorous eyes and a big generous mouth, and hair that waved slightly. The frame was of silver and there was engraving across the bottom. Spike bent closer to read it.

David Ealing
116th Infantry—29th Division—A.E.F.
Missing in Action—Samogneux, October 1918.

FOR a long time Spike stood looking at the photograph, his brows furrowed in a perplexed frown. Where . . . Was it . . .

He was still looking at it when he heard a slight sound behind him. He turned. Maysie Ealing stood in the doorway leading from the back room.

For a moment there was no sound in the room while the two of them confronted each other, the young man and the girl. Not exactly a pretty girl and not really a girl any longer. She looked as if she might be about the same age as the dark woman who lay in the upper room on Sark Island—Linda Crossley.

The blonde of her hair was faded and her small piquant mouth was bracketed with two tired lines. She was thin, too thin. And yet there was about her a feeling of strength, of firmness of will. Her eyes were deeply shadowed now with grief and horror and physical exhaustion, but her chin was firm. She bore a strong resemblance to the soldier photograph on the wall.

It was she who spoke first in a dead, colorless voice. "You are from the district attorney's office? You wanted to see me?"

"Yes; may we sit down?"

She looked at him, uncertainty and suspicion in her steady gaze. "You were not—down there this morning?"

"No, I know. The situation *is* a bit unorthodox, and although I'm not officially connected with the district attorney's office I—ah—assist at times on—ah—special assignments. You see I'm the district attorney's brother." He drew forth his visiting card and handed it to her.

She took it and looked at it for a moment without comment. Then she motioned him to a chair and sat down herself in one opposite.

"There are two points, Miss Ealing," he began, "that were not entirely cleared up this morning."

She sighed heavily, wearily. "Do I have to go over all that again?"

"No. I just want to ask you two questions." His hands fumbled for his cigarette case. Then hastily remembering the circumstances he shoved the case back into his vest pocket. But she had seen the gesture.

"It's all right," she said. "Go ahead and smoke." She stretched forth her hand. "I'll take one too. Being silly isn't going to do any good to anyone."

He lit her cigarette and his own. She inhaled deeply and settled back more easily in her chair as if in the curling wisps of smoke she found relaxation at last from the intolerable strain of the last twenty-four hours.

And then Spike shot the first question at her.

"Why did you go to work for John Fairleigh six months ago?"

Her hand raising the cigarette to her lips paused in mid-air. Her eyes were quickly veiled with down-drooping lids so that no one might read the expression therein.

"Why—why should I not?"

"I only wondered if there was a reason—a special reason?"

"No, of course not. It—it is a good position."

"Will you keep it now—after this?"

"Of course—if I want to."

"And do you want to."

"Yes—well, for a while anyway. Things are so upset now—I don't know—"

He waited a bit before he posed his second question. But when he did finally he shot it at her quickly.

"Tell me, has Linda Crossley been in this house within the last two days?"

For a moment there was no answer. Slowly she rose from her chair. She held on to the arms as if to steady herself. Her lighted cigarette dropped to the floor. Her face was white, contorted with the effort to erase all betraying expression. A valiant effort but futile. Stark fright and horror stared from her eyes. She swayed. She grabbed for the back of the chair, missed it. She fell heavily before he could catch her. She had fainted.

For a long time Spike waited in the living-room after he had carried her into the rear bedroom and summoned the Swedish woman. Just before he left he stood once more before the picture of the young man in uniform. Gradually a look of satisfaction came into his eyes.

He was just remembering where he had seen that face before.

CHAPTER XVII

THE paucity of real evidence weighed heavily on Inspector Herschman's mind and he felt that life was not entirely moulded to his heart's desire. This feeling of depression was intensified by the presence in his outer office of six newspaper reporters. He knew that if he went out and faced them they would ask all sorts of childish, troublesome questions. "Do you know who killed Prentice Crossley and, if not, why not?" and "Who killed Mrs. Deborah Ealing?" and "Why the hell don't the police find out?"

And since Inspector Herschman had to admit to himself that he didn't know the answer to any of these questions he instructed his secretary to say that he was in conference and could see no one. Having thus entrenched himself behind the world's most palpable prevarication, he sat in his office, gazing out of the window with troubled eyes, fiddling with the letter opener and chewing on an unlit cigar.

It was thus that Spike found him. He took one

glance at Herschman's face and cried out in deep concern.

"Inspector, you look terrible."

"I feel terrible."

"Good! What do you say to coming up to my place for a drink? I've got my car outside."

For the first time that morning Inspector Herschman brightened. He rose and reached for his hat.

Three hours later he was brighter still.

"It's a cinch," he confided as he supported himself fraternally on Spike's shoulder. "Just an open and shut case. We got 'em all but that girl—that one that swiped your boat. But she's the one we want to get but we don't know where to find her. We don't know where she is. She's gone. Just an open and shut—"

Spike assisted him to his feet. Outside he put him into a taxi and gave the driver the Inspector's home address.

For more than an hour after Herschman had left Spike sat in deep thought, sorting out the information which he had just extracted from the unwitting

and slightly foozled police inspector.

Here, boiled down to undramatic statements of fact, were the results of many hours of patient police investigation, two quarts of Scotch and a conscience so unscrupulous as to take advantage of a man when he's drunk.

In reading them, one should keep in mind the fact that according to the reports of the medical examiner Prentice Crossley was killed "some time before midnight" on Sunday, June 4, and that Mrs. Deborah Ealing was killed "some time after noon" on Tuesday, June 13.

Jason Fream, stamp dealer: Says that on night of June 4 was at church and at home with his wife and daughter. This corroborated by wife and daughter. Says that on June 13 was at work all day at Acme Stamp Company. Corroborated by four employes.

Kurt Koenig, stamp dealer: Says that on the night of June 4 he was at his apartment alone. No corroboration. Says that on afternoon of June 13 he left his shop in charge of assistant and spent the afternoon in the Public Library at Forty-second Street examining the Benjamin K. Miller stamp collection in the third floor corridor. Absence from shop corroborated by assistant, and two attendants at the library recall seeing him in upper corridor during the afternoon but unable to give exact time.

Homer Watson, stamp dealer: Says that on the night of June 4 he was home alone with three servants. Servants corroborate this. Says that he spent June 13 on the road between Poughkeepsie and New York. Was up there on business, left in his car at nine in the morning and did not get back to New York until 6 p.m. Driving his car himself and alone. Had car trouble and was delayed for four hours in Yonkers. This corroborated by mechanic in Yonkers who worked on his car from twelve to four.

John Fairleigh: Says that on June 4 he was at the Alhambra Hotel in Los Angeles at a legal convention. Hotel register at Alhambra shows that he checked into the hotel on Sunday morning, June 4 and checked out Tuesday morning June 6. Says that on June 13 he left his office at 11:30 in the morning and did not return until the next morning. Said he spent the afternoon in private law library of a friend on Riverside Drive. No corroboration of this, as the library was in a private house from which all servants and even the friend himself were temporarily absent for a month. Fairleigh however in possession of key to the house and could let himself in.

SPIKE read and re-read the notes that he had assembled from Herschman's wandering conversation. Not a good clean double alibi in the lot . . . holes, fulla holes . . . any one of 'em. . . .

He crumpled the paper and flung it with a disgusted gesture into the wastebasket and started pacing the room. But presently he retrieved the crumpled wad and smoothed it out on top of the desk. His forehead knit into a speculative frown as he studied again that last paragraph. He folded it carefully and put it in his pocket and reached for his hat. In the street below he climbed into his car, and headed for the Holland Tunnel.

An hour later he drew up in front of the little bungalow on the outskirts of the Forestry Reservation, the bungalow at which John Fairleigh had paid a brief visit while Spike had lurked in the bushes five days before. The blinds were down against the glare of the afternoon sun and the place looked deserted. He mounted the steps and rapped. A woman opened the door.

"Mrs. Polk?" he inquired with the engaging voice of a salesman using the approach approved in the selling manual.

MAYSIE EALING

"Yes, sir. I'm Mrs. Polk, and—" She looked at him with dawning recognition. "And you're the young man who was here last week, with your car broke down, ain't you."

Spike acknowledged the identification, elaborated it. "My name's—Smith. I'm a friend of Mr. Fairleigh's. I'm wondering if you could help me find him. I've just been down at his office in New York and they didn't know where he was but they said that he might be out here. I'm awfully anxious to get in touch with him."

"Well now, I'm right sorry, Mr. Smith, you had all that trip for nothing, because he ain't here."

Mr. 'Smith' tch, tched with vexation.

"No," the woman went on, "he ain't been here since—" She broke off in sudden confusion, the pleasant amiable smile with which she had greeted her visitor replaced by an expression of misgiving.

"Since Tuesday," 'Mr. Smith' finished the sentence for her and looked a little puzzled at her sudden change of countenance.

"Oh, then you know about him bein' here Tuesday afternoon," she said and there was relief in her voice.

"Oh yes," lightly, "he told me he was coming. Well, sorry to have troubled you, Mrs. Polk. I'll be running along."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE thing I can't understand," Spike said as he settled himself for an after-dinner smoke, "is why the hell?"

Koenig opposite him refused a cigarette and produced his own cigar, clipped and lit it and gave a few experimental puffs.

"Yes?" he said.

"Well, why the hell did Fairleigh tell that cock-and-bull story to the police about being at a law library on the afternoon of June 13, knowing all the time that no one could possibly substantiate his story for the simple reason that it wasn't true?"

"Fairleigh, as I told you before, is a man of honor."

"A damn fool if you ask me."

"It frequently amounts to the same thing."

"But why not admit where he was—out in Jersey at this Polk place?"

"Because for some reason he did not want the police to know that he was out in Jersey at this Polk place."

"But why?"

Koenig merely shrugged his shoulders.

"It's pretty obvious," Spike went on, "that he has said something to the Polks about keeping his visit quiet. The woman slipped badly and let herself into a neat trap, which I took advantage of. Fortunately for my purposes she was a dumb, simple soul and didn't see through me."

For a while the two men sat smoking in silence. They were on a tiny balcony which gave a view of the vast, teeming stretches of the city. Dusk was settling down, blotting out the ugliness. Street lights from the distance looked like spangling jewels. Koenig broke the silence.

"For your purposes, you say. Just what are your purposes?"

Spike hesitated a moment before he spoke. "Why—I suppose they're the same as yours. After all, a lady in distress, flung on my doorstep, all that sort of thing."

"Yes—for Linda. But I do not fear so much for her now."

"You mean on account of the Ealing murder?"

Koenig nodded. "It is very certain that the same person did both of them."

"Are you so sure?" Spike challenged.

"I can only draw the obvious conclusion. The manner of the killing, the weapon, the stamp found clutched in the hand. Identical in both cases, for of course the police would have found a stamp in Crossley's hand if Linda had not removed it."

Spike considered this gravely. "So that if Linda Crossley didn't commit the second murder the obvious inference is that she was not present at the scene of the first."

Again there was a long silence as the two men smoked. This time it was Spike who broke it. "Another thing I can't understand," he confessed, "is this Ealing girl. Does she know Linda Crossley?"

"Does that not seem fairly obvious?" Koenig pointed out. "You yourself say that the telephone operator told you Linda telephoned Maysie Ealing the afternoon after Crossley was murdered. After all, it is quite likely that she may have known her. Miss Ealing is Fairleigh's secretary and Fairleigh was her grandfather's lawyer."

"But why that dead faint?"

Koenig smiled indulgently. "Probably because she had been reading the newspapers and had jumped to the same conclusion that everyone else had—that Linda was—ah—involved." The kindly little man obviously shrank from using the harsh terminology of homicide. "Incidentally what was your idea in asking her if Linda had been there?"

"I don't know exactly. Just a hunch, I suppose. Just to see what she'd do."

"And she did it. Oh well, if you really want to know what if any is the relationship between Linda and this Maysie Ealing it will be simple enough to ask Linda herself. If I can trespass on your hospitality for a day, I think I'll go out tomorrow to see her."

"By all means. I won't be there, but just make yourself at home and Pug and Mrs. Parsons will—"

The telephone bell interrupted his sentence. He picked up the receiver on the table at his elbow, spoke for a few minutes with the person at the other end. As he replaced the instrument he turned to Koenig.

"That's Pug himself," he explained and there was a troubled note to his voice. "He was phoning from Penn Station to see if I was in. He's on his way up here now."

"Is—is there any trouble? Linda—" There was sudden alarm in Koenig's eyes.

"He didn't say, but he sounded funny."

An uneasy silence settled on the two men while they waited. Spike rose and paced the balcony. Koenig's foot tapped nervously on the stone coping. In spite of his dinner jacket he was still wearing the incongruous home cobbled shoes and they made a particularly irritating tattoo. Finally Spike could stand it no longer.

"Come on, Koenig, let's go into the house and get a drink."

Twenty minutes later when Pug arrived they were

somewhat fortified against the impending news.

Pug's entrance was slightly dramatic in the manner of one who arrives breathless after a twenty-mile dash on horseback, rather than as one who had ridden but three in an upholstered taxicab.

"Jeez," he accused his lord and master in a most un-British manner, "where the hell have you been the last two days?"

"Oh, in and out, but here in New York all the time."

"Well, I been callin' you twice a day ever since yesterday morning, and I never could get you, so tonight I just made up my mind and come in."

"What's the matter?"

"It's that dame."

Koenig clutched Pug's arm.

"She beat it. Took the new boat. Tuesday morning—early."

CHAPTER XIX

ON Thursday evening for the second time within twenty-four hours Koenig dined with Spike in the town apartment. He had come immediately at Spike's telephone invitation.

"Did you find her—do you know—is she—?" The anxious questions rushed out as soon as he crossed the threshold.

Spike shook his head. "No, I didn't find her."

"Oh—" Koenig sank into a chair. His disappointment was tragic. His face usually so round and rosy was strained and drawn with anxiety and it was obvious that he had not slept the night before. Spike brought him a stiff drink and presently he pulled himself together. But at dinner he ate little and talked less. In the keenness of his disappointment at no news of Linda he sought refuge in silence. After dinner they smoked their cigars and Spike reverted once more to the subject that lay so heavily upon them both.

"You know, Koenig," he began, "I have an idea."

Koenig nodded, but indifferently.

"I may have forgotten to tell you, but the other day when I was up at Maysie Ealing's I saw a photograph that interested me. It interested me a lot. Probably because at first it piqued and puzzled me. Then I remembered when I had seen that face before."

Spike paused and drew his wallet from an inside pocket. He opened it and extracted a newspaper clipping and handed it over to Koenig. It was a half-tone reproduction of a photograph—a young man, and the eyes that looked out of the picture were the same as those that had looked out of that silver frame in the Ealing apartment. There was a caption beneath. "Will anyone knowing whereabouts of fourteen-year-old boy resembling this photograph communicate with Box 71, Saugus Index."

Koenig looked at the picture, read the caption and handed it back.

"That photograph," Spike went on, "appeared in the West Saugus Weekly Index of the issue that came out the day before Prentice Crossley was killed."

"But what does it mean? Who is Box 71?"

"I don't know, but I'm going to find out. I'm going out to Saugus tomorrow and find out who inserted

that photograph in the paper because I have an idea that the information may be interesting. Somehow or other I have a feeling that it will mean something. That picture appears in the paper with that very strange caption. Prentice Crossley is murdered the day after. Soon after that Mrs. Deborah Ealing is murdered and in the same manner.

"And on the wall of the Ealing apartment is a picture of this same fellow. It's David Ealing, her son, 'missing in action.' I know that because there was a bit of engraving underneath the frame—his name and division, 116th Infantry, and 'missing in action' October 1918, Samogneux. I got a hunch."

"But I don't quite see how it hitches up," Koenig protested.

"Neither do I," Spike agreed, "unless. . . ." He left the sentence hanging in air as he gathered himself together from the low chair in which he had been sprawling and began pacing nervously up and down the room, his face very thoughtful, indeed.

"'Missing in action,'" he repeated half to himself as if he had no audience and was only thinking aloud. Koenig lit a cigar and puffed at it in a desultory manner. The telephone rang. Spike picked it up, said, "Hello!" in a preoccupied fashion in the general direction of the instrument.

And then quickly his hand on the instrument clutched tighter in sudden tension.

"Who? . . . Yes, yes. . . . *What?* . . . When? . . ." He put his hand over the mouthpiece and turned to Koenig. "It's Maysie Ealing. She says . . ." He jerked back to attention to the voice that was coming over the wire. He listened. "Yes, but that won't be necessary. He's right here now. . . . Yes, here with me. . . . Yes, right away."

Spike banged the receiver into the cradle and turned to Koenig. "Get your hat," he told him and his voice was edged with excitement. "Go up to Maysie Ealing's right away. It's 143 West 110th St. She says Linda Crossley just turned up there at her apartment. Linda wants you to come up there, right away."

CHAPTER XX

At nine o'clock the next morning, Spike was waiting in front of the office of the Saugus Weekly Index when Clem Yoder arrived. Mr Yoder combined in his person the offices of editor, reportorial staff, typesetter, proof-reader and business manager. He was a grizzled little fellow whose acquaintance with local and private history was boundless, and it took Spike all of half an hour, thanks to these garrulous proclivities, to find out what ordinarily would have required ten minutes.

"Well, now, lemme see," Mr. Yoder peered at the clipping which Spike tendered. "Yes, sir, that's from the *Index* all right. I recollect the picture, sure enough. Always did have a great memory for faces. Well, that was brought in here, oh two, three weeks ago, maybe three, four."

"By whom, do you know?"

"Certainly. I got to keep track of that so's if any letters come addressed to Box 71, I can always send 'em on."

"Have any come for that box number?"

"No, as a matter of fact, they ain't. But you never can tell."

"This person who brought it in. Who was it? What name did they give?"

"Well now, of course, Mr. Tracy, I couldn't tell you that. That's confidential like. To tell the truth I don't recollect it myself. I ain't so good on names as I am on faces. Of course I've got it wrote down here. . . ."

Mr. Yoder delved into the old-fashioned roll-top desk from which he conducted his business affairs and from one of its pigeon holes, he drew forth a packet of dusty index cards with a rubber band around them.

"Lemme see, now. Box sixty-nine, seventy, seventy-one. Here it is." He drew the card out and held it up to the light the better to decipher his own scraggled writing. He adjusted his glasses, peered closer.

And then suddenly something happened to his face. The lower jaw dropped and the eyes popped. He looked up gaping into Spike's face.

"Lordamighty!" he said.

Spike attempted to take advantage of him while he was still overcome with amazement.

"And the name was—"

Mr. Yoder looked up. His jaw was back in place but his eyes were still a bit poppy. "I couldn't tell you, really Mr. Tracy, but I think I'd better be tellin' the police."

"Of course," Spike agreed amiably, "but that's why I'm here. My brother, you know," and he nodded in the general easterly direction of the district attorney's country home, a mile or so from town. "I'm helping the police on this case," he said blandly. "My brother sent me out to get this information."

Mr. Yoder hesitated, eyed Spike suspiciously, but there was something in the easy assurance, the candid gaze that made it impossible to doubt that his words were as honest as statements sworn before a notary.

"Well," said Mr. Yoder capitulating at last, "it's a name that's been in the paper a lot. It sure did give me a turn when I picked out this card. I recollect now her bringin' it in," and he read aloud the name and address on the card.

On the way back to the city Spike stopped off at a pay station on the outskirts of Queens and put in a call to Koenig's combination shop and apartment, but there was no answer. His brow was clouded as he made his way out to the curb and got into his car. It was at Third Avenue and Sixty-fourth Street while he waited for a green light that the headlines from a sidewalk newsstand caught his eye. He took one long distance glance at their glaring blackness and motioned the newsdealer to the curb. He shoved a dime into his hand and grabbed a paper.

THIRD VICTIM IN STAMP MURDER
Kurt Koenig in critical condition in Cutter Hospital after attack by unknown assailant

CHAPTER XXI

The people at the hospital were irritating.

"Mr. Koenig?" The girl at the information desk which barred Spike's way to the inner regions of the institution did not sound encouraging as she consulted a card index file.

"Oh, you mean 247," she said as she pulled a card half way out of the file. She plugged in on the switchboard at her elbow.

"Gentleman to see 247."

She listened for a few minutes, then pulled out the plug and turned back to Spike. "No visitors for 247."

"I know, but—"

"No visitors!"

"May I see the doctor?"

"He's with the patient now. If you'd like to wait . . ." She indicated a small anteroom at the left.

Spike paced nervously up and down the anteroom. He looked anxiously at his watch. He flung himself into a chair and drew from his pocket the paper that he had snatched from the newsdealer at Sixty-fourth Street. He had had time to read only the headlines. Now he unfolded it, spread it out before him.

"Kurt Koenig, stamp dealer who negotiated stamp purchases and sales for Prentice Crossley, murdered June 4, was seriously wounded by an unknown assailant as he was walking through Central Park late last night. He is in Cutter Hospital with a bullet wound through his left shoulder.

"He was discovered unconscious from loss of blood in the path that leads through the park from 106th Street on the east to Lenox and St. Nicholas avenues on the north, by Patrolman J. F. Duffy. The assault occurred just south of the lake where the path is closely hedged by dense shrubbery. It is believed that the assailant was hiding in these bushes as the bullet was fired at close range.

"After Koenig was taken to the hospital it was found that his watch, an old-fashioned closed face model, contained one of the valuable stamps reported missing two weeks ago from the collection of the late Prentice Crossley. It is the 13-cent Hawaiian issue of 1851-52, more popularly known as a 'missionary' and valued at $17,500. This is the second of the missing Crossley stamps that have been recovered. The first, a six-real Spanish stamp worth $12,500, was found in the hand of Mrs. Deborah Ealing, the second stamp murder victim.

"At Police Headquarters fingerprint experts found that all traces of fingerprints had been removed from both case and crystal of the watch. The only prints found on it were those of Patrolman James F. Smith who went through Koenig's clothes soon after he was brought to the hospital.

"At an early hour this morning Koenig . . ."

Spike lowered the paper and stared hard at the white wall in front of him. His face was expressionless, but there was a strange set to his jaw. He did not finish the newspaper story. When the doctor came to the door, he was still staring at the wall . . . thinking . . .

The doctor was almost as irritating as the reception clerk. "I'm sorry," he said with heartless politeness, "but he can have no visitors."

"But—" Spike sputtered impotently.

The doctor turned to the reception clerk at the switchboard. "Get in touch with a Mr. Philip Tracy and ask him to come to the hospital. He's in the telephone book. The patient in 247 wants to see him. Tell him . . ."

When Spike first entered the room Koenig was lying with his face toward the opposite wall.

At the sound of the opening door the injured man turned, and when he saw it was Spike he smiled weakly.

"Only ten minutes." The nurse laid down the time limit as she closed the door behind her and left the two men alone.

Spike drew up a chair and bent over very close so that Koenig's weak whispers might be audible.

"How did it happen?" he asked.

"I don't know—after I left your place—I—I wrote a letter and then—then I went through the park. I started to take a taxi and then I thought—I would walk. I was all upset. I needed to—to get hold of myself before I saw Linda—so I took the short cut through the park. Then I don't know—I just remember bushes close to the path—on the left side and then—" He closed his eyes and gestured weakly.

"And the next thing you knew you woke up in the hospital." Spike finished the sentence for him. "Listen, did anyone know you were going up there?"

"No one—except you."

Spike grinned. "Well, I didn't do it. And anyway that's not quite right. Maysie Ealing and Linda Crossley knew you were coming. I told Maysie over the telephone."

It was Koenig's turn to grin now. "You may be a—a damn fool—but you are still a little—distrustful."

Spike forebore to argue the matter. "What about this letter you mentioned? What did you stop to write a letter for?"

"To Linda."

"Linda? But you were going to see her, you were on your way?"

"I know—but I was a little afraid—afraid maybe that I might not—get there."

"Afraid of what?"

"Just afraid—a—premonition — what you call a hunch. You see—I was right."

"Look here, where'd you write this letter?"

"The drugstore—on the corner near your place. I bought a tablet and envelope—stamp—wrote it sitting down—one of the soda tables."

"Was there anybody else in the drug store at the time. Did you notice?"

"Lots —lots of people."

"Did you tell anyone where you were going, what you were going for?"

Koenig shook his head.

Spike was thoughtful, his brows knit in perplexity. He glanced at his watch. The minutes were ticking off rapidly. Koenig put out a weak hand and laid it on Spike's arm.

"Listen—my friend—go see her now. Tell her to do as I said—in the letter—now today—tell her to do it."

"Do what?"

"She knows—it's in the letter. Tell her!" There was evident a fierce urgency even in his marked weakness.

"Yes, yes, I will." Spike reassured him. Koenig closed his eyes. He was getting very tired. Spike leaned over the bed solicitously. His time was up.

"Is there anything I can get for you, do for you?"

"No—just see—Linda."

"Yes, I'll do that. But anything from your place. Any clothes or anything?"

"Bring pajamas—the blue ones with white stripes—these hospital shirts—my keys are in—pants pockets." Even in his weakness Koenig still retained his sartorial vanity.

Outside in the corridor Spike summoned the nurse and had her show him where Koenig's clothes were hung in a locker in the hall.

CHAPTER XXII

ONE forty-three West 110th St., of a dull, warm afternoon in June was quiet except for the occasional noisy pounding of a child up and down the dark stairway. Mrs. O'Brien of the first floor front was, as usual, leaning out of the window, lazily casting her eyes up and down the street in search of a gossiping neighbor who might be passing. Mrs. Torrence of the fourth floor rear, returning from the corner market laden with a large paper shopping bag bursting with groceries, stopped to pass the time of day. Soon they were joined by Mrs. Barton who lived in the basement.

All three stopped talking and stared when the Cadillac roadster drew up at the curb and the young man got out. In the vestibule he pressed a bell and stood and waited. The three women watched him. It was not often that Number 143 had visitors who arrived in Cadillacs. Then Mrs. Torrence broke away from the group and mounted the three low steps to the vestibule.

"If it's Miss Ealing you're lookin' for," she said as she noted the buzzer he was pressing, "she ain't here."

"Not here?" The young man inquired in polite surprise.

"No, she's moved. She moved early this morning." Mrs. Torrence peered at the letter boxes. "I guess she forgot to tell the postman her forwarding address. There's some mail for her." The young man peered too.

"You don't know where she's gone, do you?"

"Just over the next street to a rooming house. Mrs. Parley's. I can't tell you the exact number, but I can show you where it is if you'd like."

"Oh—well—no, I don't think that will be necessary. I'll get in touch with her through her office."

"You a friend of hers?"

"I know her slightly."

"Too bad about her mother, wasn't it?"

"Very tragic."

"Still in a way, I say it's a good thing. I don't mean the poor old lady goin' off so terrible like that, but just the same the daughter really didn't have no life of her own, and she ain't as young as she once was. Now I guess she can go to England and marry that young man of hers. It isn't as if she—"

"I think," he interrupted, indicating the pay station at the back of the hall, "I'll make a telephone call."

He talked a long time to some fellow he called Jack. So long in fact that Mrs. Torrence, finding no further pretext for lingering, went on upstairs. At the sound of the door closing behind her, the young man abruptly ceased his conversation with "Jack" who, as a matter of fact, was nothing but an empty buzzing at the other end of the wire.

He hung up the telephone and listened. There were no more voices outside. He went quietly to the open door of the vestibule and peered through the crack of the jamb. Mrs. Barton was gone and Mrs. O'Brien was no longer at the window. He pushed the door to, but did not latch it.

The vestibule now was almost in darkness. Only a faint light came through the transom above. From his pocket he pulled out a knife with a stout blade, thrust it under the letterbox marked Ealing. He pried, lifted, pried some more. There was a slight wrenching sound as the little door swung open.

HE snatched out the mail, leafed through it quickly—a bill from the gas company, an advertising circular, a letter. He thrust the bill and the circular back into the box, closed the little door, pressed it firmly until it was flush with the frame, so that it didn't look as if it had been pried open.

At 102nd St., Spike turned his car east off the Avenue and drew up in front of his own building. Upstairs in his apartment he took out the letter, to obtain which he had just committed a penitentiary offense. It was addressed to Miss Maysie Ealing, but inside there was a second envelope bearing the name of Linda Crossley.

"Of course . . . he wouldn't put Linda's name on the outside for every postman and mail clerk who had been reading the papers to see . . . wise guy. . . .

For a moment he hesitated, looking at the envelope. Conscience . . . honor . . . a gentleman . . . oh, to hell with all that tripe! He ripped open the letter. There was just one page on cheap tablet paper. The writing was uneven as if the hand that had driven the pencil had trembled slightly.

> "Linda, my dear: I have time for so little now. But if anything goes wrong and I—but never mind that now. I think I have found the family. Their name is Polk and they live in a little town called West Albion, N. J. If anything goes wrong before I see you, go to the police and tell them where you have been all the while. They will believe you and know that you have had nothing to do with all this horrible business. Go now as soon as you receive this letter. K. Koenig."

CHAPTER XXIII

"PHILIP," the district attorney said with the impatience of one who has weighty problems on his shoulders, "I can't see you now. Inspector Herschman and I are having a very important conference. Please wait outside and . . ."

But dignity and gloom and weighty problems, having no part in the young man's make-up, slid easily off his shoulders leaving no impression.

"Inspector! Richard! How godawful you look, both of you." He greeted them with cheerful good humor. "Just like the before-taking photograph in patent medicine ads. The air in this place is lousy." He threw the window wide open and the breeze merrily scattered papers from the district attorney's desk. "What you two need is a little riotous living. What have you both been doing with yourselves? Why don't you—"

"Philip!" The district attorney's stern voice broke through the bright chatter.

"Yes, Richard." The young man was suddenly meek.

"Will you please do as I ask."

"No, Richard." The voice was that of a docile child. He sat down and lit a cigarette.

The district attorney's mouth tightened and his face grew slightly apoplectic. One could hardly summon a patrolman forcibly to eject one's own brother. There was, after all, the Tracy family dignity to consider. His eyes met Herschman's. The inspector quickly veiled a smile and joined the district attorney in glowering at the insouciant young man.

But the insouciant young man still refused to be impressed. "You know," he said lightly, as he blew a long, lazy cloud of cigarette smoke into the air, "I was thinking that if you haven't already discovered the bird that knocked off Prentice Crossley and old Mrs. Ealing and winged Koenig, you might be interested in something I found out about . . ."

Here is a scene which we will pass over quickly. It is not pleasant to witness the rout of the righteous before an advocate of light living and debauchery. It is still less gratifying to see dignity confounded, and the might and majesty of the law brought to the point where it eats gratefully out of the hand of a young man who is himself guilty of (1) compounding a felony, (2) wilfully withholding evidence from the police, (3) false impersonation, and (4) robbing the United States mails. Let us cravenly turn our face on this seamier side of a district attorney's life and skip forward fifteen minutes.

But let us not get the impression that in those fifteen minutes Spike revealed all that he had discovered since that day almost two weeks before when he had sat in the Crossley library sunk in sham slumber.

As a matter of fact he was chary with his revelations. He did not, for instance, tell them of Linda Crossley's sojourn on Sark Island, and Koenig's subsequent visit to the Island. He made no mention of his interview—under false pretenses—with Maysie Ealing. And naturally, since he was talking to "officers of the people pledged to the punishment of those who transgress the law," he did not confess that he had just filched a letter from Maysie Ealing's mail box.

"It's Fairleigh who intrigues me," he said. "You know after that episode in the Crossley library, you remember that first day, I had one of those indefinable hunches. I reasoned that if Fairleigh did have anything on his mind, the first thing he'd do after getting back to town was to get it off. That morning he'd come directly from the landing field to his office and then to the Crossley place. He didn't have time to do much but what you demanded of him—get the Crossley will from his own safe and meet you at the house. But afterward— Well, I followed him."

Briefly he related the story of his first trip to the little town near the forestry reserve in New Jersey.

"Then when I read about this second murder in the paper, I had another hunch. I went out there again and talked to the woman." He sketched in his conversation with Mrs. Polk.

"Since Fairleigh was in New Jersey all afternoon, what is his motive in withholding that information?" his brother wanted to know.

"Because, obviously, he didn't want anyone to know that he was in New Jersey all afternoon," Spike explained.

"But that's a perfect alibi," Herschman protested.

"Exactly! And he had a perfect alibi for the other murder, Crossley. That's why I don't quite trust him. I'd be inclined to take things over with him. Incidentally where was he the night Koenig was shot?"

"At the theater with his wife. And they went straight home afterward."

Herschman picked up the telephone. "Get hold of Fairleigh," he said, when a connection had been put through to his own office, "and tell him to come over here. We want to talk to him."

NASSAU STREET is not far from police headquarters. Within fifteen minutes the district attorney's secretary announced Fairleigh. "If you don't mind, let me handle him," Spike suggested as they waited for him to come into the office.

It was almost two weeks since Spike had seen Fairleigh. There was a change, but not a great one. His hard, gray-blue eyes were shadowed as with sleepless nights, and the lines around his mouth had deepened. But he still had that air of implacability, as if heaven itself would not budge him from his own preconceived course.

When he had exchanged greetings with the inspector and the district attorney he seated himself and looked inquiringly at Spike.

"My brother," the district attorney explained somewhat apologetically. "He has been—ah—assisting with the case. You perhaps remember that you met him at the Crossley house the first morning you came back from the Coast."

Fairleigh accepted the explanation but said nothing. Spike lit a cigarette and slouched down in his chair with a deceiving sense of ease.

"Speaking of that first morning," he said, "things were rather disorganized and hurried then. There were some loose ends we didn't quite clear up. Perhaps you can help us now, Fairleigh."

Fairleigh nodded in acquiescence.

"We don't feel that you have been entirely—ah—candid with us."

"In what way, may I ask?" There was a hard, flat note to Fairleigh's voice.

"I refer particularly to certain clauses in Mr. Crossley's will." Spike paused. There was an almost imperceptible tightening of the lines about Fairleigh's mouth.

"There was one phrase referring to you and the $50,000 bequest which you were to receive that went something like this—'in recognition of his steadfast refusal to betray the trust which I have had in him.' Would you mind, just once again explaining the meaning of that?"

"I thought," Fairleigh replied, "that I had made that plain. For fifteen years I have managed Mr. Crossley's affairs, managed them capably, I think you will find, if you care to look into the matter."

"And I suppose you received a certain fee for doing this?"

"Certainly."

"So that the $50,000 bequest is what you might call a work of supererogation?"

"Possibly."

"And then again, possibly one might look at it as a special—ah—inducement in return for which you yourself rendered a work of—ah—supererogation?"

"I don't understand you."

"Then I shall put it very bluntly." Spike leaned forward and eyed Fairleigh. "Isn't it true, Fairleigh, that that $50,000 was left to you by Prentice Crossley because you had rendered him some great service entirely outside your regular duties as manager of his business affairs?"

"Certainly not!" The answer came quickly, emphatically. Was it too quick? Too emphatic?

"You're quite sure of that?"

"Quite!"

Spike paused and considered the situation. Then he started in on a new tack.

"But there's another clause in that will that seems equally—ah—open to interpretation. I refer to that sentence about Linda Crossley."

Again that tightening of the lines around Fairleigh's mouth at the mention of Linda Crossley.

"The phrase there," Spike continued, "if I'm not mistaken is: 'And on John Fairleigh I lay the burden of the guidance of my granddaughter, Linda Crossley. I leave to him the onerous task of saving her, if possible, from the consequences of her own indiscretions.'"

Spike paused and waited, but Fairleigh was silent.

"Tell me, Fairleigh, has Linda Crossley a—well, what they call in the good old melodramas, a past?"

"I don't believe that I understand you."

"For a lawyer you are singularly obtuse."

"Perhaps."

"To put it in words of one syllable, I mean has Linda Crossley in the past committed some crime, has she involved herself in any way in anything nefarious?"

"I know very little about her, but I should not imagine so. She is hardly the—criminal type."

"And yet her grandfather is murdered and she has disappeared." Spike uttered the damning juxtaposition quietly.

"I will never believe that there is any relation between those two facts—never." Again the answer was quick and emphatic.

"I don't believe I said there was."

"You implied it though."

"WELL, we shan't argue about that now. Let's get back to facts. I'm asking you for an explanation of that clause in Prentice Crossley's will. Just what did he mean when he said, 'the onerous task of saving her from the consequences of her own indiscretions'?"

Again the hard blue eyes of Fairleigh met the direct gaze of his interrogator even as they had that first morning in the Crossley library, and with the same implacable quietness he replied:

"I haven't the slightest idea."

Spike tamped out his cigarette and lit another one. "And that," he murmured to himself, "is that." Aloud he addressed Fairleigh directly with a deceiving casualness.

"All right, let's forget that. There's just one other thing I'd like to ask you. Where were you on the afternoon when Mrs. Deborah Ealing was murdered?"

"I have already explained that to the district attorney and the inspector."

"Would you mind explaining it once again—to me."

Fairleigh related the story of a visit to the law library on the Drive.

Spike nodded and smiled. "Interesting," he said, "if true."

Fairleigh smiled too, but it was a tight, hard smile. "If, as you say, Mr. Tracy, it isn't true, and I was not in my friend's library, where was I? What would you suggest?"

"Oh," said Spike nonchalantly, "I'm not 'suggesting' anything. I'm telling you. You were—" He paused and inhaled deeply from his cigarette. "You spent the entire afternoon in New Jersey at the home of Mr. Henry Polk at a little town called West Albion, which is on the edge of the Forestry Reserve."

There was a moment of silence. Fairleigh just sat there, unmoving. His eyes as they met Spike's were still direct, unflinching. But imperceptibly almost, something seemed to go out of him, like air leaking from a balloon. At last his glance fell. It was a gesture of defeat.

"Yes," he said quietly, "you're right."

"Then why the hell did you tell this cock-and-bull story about being in New York?"

Another moment of silence. Then Fairleigh spoke. "I cannot tell you that."

"You mean you don't know?"

"No, of course not. I'm not feeble-minded."

"You mean you *won't* tell?"

"Yes, if you wish to put it that way."

Spike was standing now looking down at Fairleigh. He gazed at him as if he were calculating his possibilities. Then suddenly he shot the question at him.

"Listen Fairleigh, do you know where Linda Crossley is?"

The last breath of air went out of the balloon. Fairleigh crumpled. "No," he said. "No, I don't, but I wish to God I did."

CHAPTER XXIV

"I THINK," said Spike addressing his brother, "that my presence might prove embarrassing to the Polks—to Mrs. Polk at least. We've met before, you know."

So it was that when the Polks were ushered into the office of J. Montgomery Tracy, they found themselves confronted by only the district attorney and the inspector. There was no sign of a certain long, lazy young man with a deceptive air of carelessness. But the close observer would have noted that the door into an inner office was ever so slightly ajar.

The Polks seated themselves nervously on the edge of the chairs which the district attorney indicated. Sunday clothes on a week day, the unfamiliar atmosphere of police headquarters, the imposing display of uniformed officers, all played a part in their apprehension. But it was apprehension compounded of something more than just externals. It was as if both of them were strung tight on wires, tense, taut, treading carefully, fearfully. And the woman's eyes in spite of inexpert dabs of powder looked red as if she had been crying.

Nor did the first few questions of the district attorney put them at their ease. The man acted as spokesman for the two of them, the woman merely nodding in agreement with his flat monosyllables.

Yes, they were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Polk of West Albion. Yes, they had lived there twenty years on their little truck farm. No, they had no children of their own, just their nephew, Edward.

"And do you know anyone by the name of Fairleigh?" The district attorney posed the question.

The man nodded. "Yes, we know a Mr. Fairleigh."

"Is he—a frequent visitor at your house?"

"He comes once in a while."

"What do you mean by 'once in a while'?"

"Oh—every month or so."

"How long have you known Mr. Fairleigh?"

"About twenty years."

"And during those twenty years have you seen him often?"

"Oh—pretty often."

"What do you mean by 'pretty often'?"

"Well, every month or so, like I said before."

"Are these visits which Mr. Fairleigh makes to your place 'every month or so' purely—ah—friendly visits?"

"Yes—you might say that Mr. Fairleigh's always been right friendly."

"That isn't what I mean. I mean are these visits of Fairleigh's to your house just in the nature of a friendly call, or do you have some definite business relationship with him?"

The man paused, his rough, work-gnarled hands working in his lap. It was as if they were the outward manifestation of an inward turmoil. His troubled eyes met the district attorney's. Then his glance shifted to his wife beside him, groping for guidance.

"Henry," she said, and her voice was faint with fear and anxiety, "you'd best do like we agreed on the way in."

He nodded slowly and turned back to his interrogator. "It's like she says. I guess I'd best tell you—tell you the truth. We had a hard time making up our mind what to do, but finally we decided lying never did come to no good. Only if anything happens about Edward—"

He broke off, unwilling to finish the sentence. There was something pathetic in his confused, fearful commitment to truth.

The district attorney was touched but puzzled. "About Edward?" he said.

Polk nodded. "Yes, Edward. You see—that was why Mr. Fairleigh has been coming to our house."

"I don't understand. Explain what you mean."

"Well," the man began slowly as if he had to pull the words forcibly from some deep unwilling well within himself, "you see, Mr. District Attorney, Edward ain't really ours. He ain't no kin to us at all. But we've had him ever since he was just a baby and it's just like he was our own and if anything was to happen that we'd—"

Again he broke off. His wife beside him was weeping quietly.

"But what has Mr. Fairleigh to do with you and your wife and this boy whom you call your nephew?" The district attorney prodded him on with the story.

"Well, you see Mr. Fairleigh used to live out near Albion before he got married about twelve, fifteen years ago, and we used to sell vegetables to his folks. His mother and father—they're dead now—were real nice people and they traded with us for years. That's how young Mr. Fairleigh—we always call him that although he ain't so young now—that's how he happened to know us.

"I guess he knew we'd never had any young ones of our own and would do right by one, so I guess that's why he brought us the baby fourteen years ago."

"You mean Edward?"

"Yes. Mr. Fairleigh brought him to us when he was just a baby, only just two weeks old and we've had him ever since. Mr. Fairleigh's paid for his keep ever since, although sometimes it seems sort of sinful us taking it, but Mr. Fairleigh always insisted. Edward's just like our own child, we're that attached to him."

"But to whom does he really belong?"

"We never did know that."

"But what did Fairleigh say when he brought him to you? You don't pick babies out of thin air, you know?"

"He said that it belonged to a woman he knew and she died right after the baby was born. Her husband was dead too. He'd got killed in an automobile accident about six months before. And there wasn't any folks to take care of the baby, so he put it out to board with us."

"Did he say who the mother was—or the father?"

"No, sir. Just friends of his. We never knew their name. We asked if Edward could go by our name, Polk, and he said yes. We gave him the Edward part, too, after a brother of my wife's that died."

"And in all these years he has never mentioned the real parents? All these years that he has been seeing you every month or so?"

"No, sir."

"But what was the purpose then of his visits?"

"To bring the board money."

"I see. He didn't send you a check."

"No, sir, he always brought the money himself in cash."

The district attorney paused and for a few moments sat drumming on the edge of his desk, his brows knit in speculation. Then abruptly he turned back to Polk, and shot a question at him.

"Has Mr. Fairleigh been to see you recently?"

POLK hesitated. It was as if he had expected the question, but dreaded it nevertheless.

"Yes," he said slowly, "he has."

"Just how recently did you see him?"

"Last—last Tuesday."

"And how long was he at your house?"

"In the afternoon."

"But how long in the afternoon?"

"Nearly all afternoon."

"Be specific. Can you remember at what time he arrived and at what time he left."

"Not exactly. But he got there around two o'clock and he left just a little before supper time around six."

"So that on the afternoon of Tuesday, June 13, Mr. John Fairleigh was at your house from about two to about six. Is that right?"

"Yes."

"That was the first time that you had seen him in how long?"

"He was—he was there just the week before, on Friday, the day he got back from out West."

"What time did he come and how long did he stay?"

"I couldn't say exactly what time he got there. Mid-afternoon about, but he only stayed fifteen, twenty minutes."

"Did he usually stay such a short time or were his visits of longer duration?"

"He just stayed a short time usually. Just long enough to leave the money, and maybe chat for a few minutes with my wife."

"And did he leave money on this Friday afternoon you're speaking of?"

"No, sir. He'd already been out two, three weeks earlier before he went to the Coast and left the money for Edward's June board."

"Then what was the purpose of his visit?"

There was a frankly puzzled look in Polk's eyes as he answered the question. It was impossible to doubt him.

"I dunno," he said. "It was queer. He rapped on the door and my wife let him in. He seemed nervous like."

"What did he say? What excuse did he make for coming?"

"He said he just happened to be driving by and thought he'd drop in and see if Edward was all right. We thought it was kind of queer, he'd never seemed to be very concerned about him before. But we said yes, Edward was fine."

"Anything else?"

"No, he just stayed about five, ten minutes and then he left."

"And you didn't see or hear from him again until last Tuesday when he spent the entire afternoon at your house?"

"Yes, that's right."

"Tell me about this second visit."

"Well—as I was saying, he got there around two o'clock and we talked, just him and me for about half an hour down to the barn. He looked so tired and so played out that after we got through talking I took him up to the house and had my wife here fix him up some cold buttermilk and cake, and afterwards he said he was that all in, he felt like he could get a mite of sleep. He said he hadn't been able to sleep o' nights, and he said out in the country like it is at West Albion maybe he could get a few winks, so we put him to bed in the spare room and he took a real good nap."

"How long?"

"Oh, I should say about three hours. He got out to our place about two, and we talked a while and he drank the buttermilk, and then went to sleep about three and we didn't wake him up till six."

"You're sure that he was—asleep in your spare bedroom all that time?"

The man looked slightly puzzled. "Why, of course," he said.

"You didn't happen to go into the spare room by any chance while he was sleeping?"

"No, sir."

"So that you really have no way of knowing that he was sleeping there all that time. You just think so."

"Why yes, I guess that's it."

"So that it is possible that he might not have been in the spare room all that time."

"Why yes, I guess—"

"NO, it ain't." This unexpected interruption was from the woman. "Of course he was there all the time. I had to go in twice to get some embroidery thread that I keep in the top bureau drawer and I saw him both times, sleeping just as sound as a baby. The second time I went in, I spread the afghan over him. It turned a little chilly that afternoon."

"I see." The district attorney accepted defeat and retreated from this line of questioning. For a moment he looked at the two simple creatures before him, a quizzical expression in his eyes, his mouth pursed. Then a second quick direct onslaught.

"What was the purpose of this second visit?"

Polk paused and again there was that hesitant recoil from an expected but dreaded question. When he spoke his voice was low and his eyes dropped.

"He—he told me not to say anything about him being out to our place—or anything about Edward."

"Why? What explanation did he give for this request?"

"He said that there was this murder of this Mr. Crossley. And it seems that he'd known Crossley for a long time and the police had been asking him about it. And he says that if folks knew that he'd been out to our place they might be asking us about him—I mean about Mr. Fairleigh. Not Mr. Crossley."

"But how does Edward come in?"

"He didn't explain that very clear. He just says that if the police got to know about him and us and Edward, it might mean Edward would get taken away from us, so if we loved the boy and wanted to keep him, we'd best not tell the police anything, if they was to come and ask us anything. We was just to say that we didn't even know a Mr. Fairleigh and that Edward belonged to some dead relation of ours. We were to keep still."

"But you're not keeping still," the district attorney reminded him heartlessly. "What's the matter. Don't you really want to keep Edward? Are you just pretending?"

"No, sir, no! It'd break us all up if anything—happened to Edward. But I been scared and worried. We're not the kind of folks that get mixed up with the police, Mr. District Attorney. We're good, self-respecting people, and I don't like this business of lying. At first I didn't know what to do, I was that worried about what Mr. Fairleigh had asked of me. I didn't even tell my wife all of it. I just told her that if anyone asked about Mr. Fairleigh not to let on like he'd been to our place on Friday—that was June 9—or last Tuesday either. I never told her all about it until today after we got orders to come in here.

"We didn't know what to do. We were scared. But we just know it ain't right to lie. We're church-going folks and we don't believe that in the end you profit by it. We don't know what this is all about. Mr. Fairleigh didn't tell us anything, and you ain't told us anything. But we do know that in the end lying don't pay, so we're telling you the truth as good as we know it, and we're asking you please not to let anything happen about Edward."

His voice had risen and his troubled, questioning eyes pleaded. It was impossible to doubt the man. Stumbling, bewildered, frightened, he was, but it was obvious that he was surrendering to truth with a simple trust in its ultimate righteous efficacy.

When at last the Polks were gone, the door to the inner office opened and Spike walked out. He was grinning broadly.

CHAPTER XXV

"THERE really should be," said Spike settling himself comfortably with his chair tipped back and his feet desecrating the district attorney's desk, "a snowstorm."

The inspector's mouth sagged slightly as he glanced out of the window at the pavements blazing with June heat.

"A raging snowstorm," Spike amplified, "and a girl, young and beautiful with her nameless child clasped to her bosom, cast out into the bitter night by an outraged father. 'Never darken my door again, you as has brought shame on the pure name o' Stebbins.' She stumbles through the blizzard. The babe whimpers. The wind—"

"Philip!" The district attorney interrupted, irritated and sarcastic. "I'm sure it's all very interesting but I hardly feel that now is the time to indulge your taste for moving picture scenarios."

"But can I help it," Spike protested, "if life takes on a Way-Down-East pattern? Is it my fault if fifteen years ago come next Michaelmas, John Fairleigh seduced some innocent Nell and then refused to do right by her?"

Suddenly the puzzled face of the inspector lightened. "I see what you mean. You mean that this Edward is really Fairleigh's child."

Spike nodded. "Although," he added, "the evidence of my eyes is against it. I've seen the boy and he's a nice appearing lad. Fairleigh, of course, looks like a sour pickle."

The district attorney repenting his disapproval of what had at first seemed irrelevant histrionics, seized upon this line of speculation.

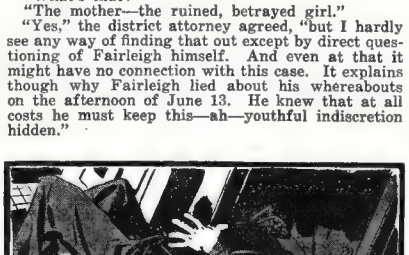
"It sounds reasonable," he admitted. "Fairleigh's married now and naturally he doesn't want it known that he's keeping a child with country people over in New Jersey. Of course he instructs them not to tell that he has been out there. And he never paid out the board money by check. Note that. He delivered the cash in person all these years. Interesting."

"And don't," Spike reminded them, "forget the most interesting point."

"What's that?"

"The mother—the ruined, betrayed girl."

"Yes," the district attorney agreed, "but I hardly see any way of finding that out except by direct questioning of Fairleigh himself. And even at that it might have no connection with this case. It explains though why Fairleigh lied about his whereabouts on the afternoon of June 13. He knew that at all costs he must keep this—ah—youthful indiscretion hidden."



"Just the same," Spike persisted, "I think it's rather interesting to consider the fact that the boy is fourteen years old, and that Fairleigh on his own testimony has been working for Crossley for fifteen years."

"And what of that?"

"Only this: Fifteen years ago Linda Crossley was nineteen years old, just—what do they say?—just blossoming into womanhood. The potentialities of the situation are intriguing."

Again it was Herschman who first caught the drift of his insinuation. "You mean," he said, "that Linda Crossley is the mother of this Edward, Fairleigh's child?"

Spike leaned back, half closed his eyes and let his errant fancy for melodrama have its way. "Can't you see it all. The girl, young and beautiful and unsophisticated. Fairleigh, man of the world, cad, blackguard, poltroon. Seduction. 'Who is the man?' That's the outraged grandfther. She refuses to tell. They always refuse to tell. It's one of the conventions. 'Nobody shall call me a hard man. A home you'll always have here, though little you've done to deserve it. But you can't bring that child.' She takes the child to the father. The least he can do is to support it. He puts it out to board with simple country folk. She returns to her grandfather. Life goes on. Fourteen years pass. . . . "

IT was at this point that the inspector snatched the conversation from Spike.

"Sure, don't you see. For years the old man—I mean Crossley—never knows anything about it—I mean who the man was. Then one day he gets hep. He's always thought that Fairleigh was the soul of honor. Left him $50,000 in his will just on that account. And then he finds out about this that happened fifteen years before. So what does he do?"

"Threatens to change his will," Spike puts in like a bright pupil answering teacher's questions.

"Sure. And then what happens? Fairleigh—"

"—murders him before he has a chance to do it." Again the bright pupil.

"Sure!" Herschman was now definitely excited. Spike's next words were like the sudden sticking of a pin into a balloon.

"But remember this: Fairleigh was in Los Angeles when Crossley was murdered."

The balloon collapsed. The inspector slumped in his chair. "Sure," he said, "I forgot that."

"And," the district attorney added, "he has an absolutely iron-clad alibi for the afternoon Mrs. Ealing was killed."

For a few moments there was the silence of defeat. The inspector was cast down, the district attorney was thoughtful. Spike lit a cigarette and yawned. Presently the district attorney broke the silence with another question.

"And just how does all this—I mean Fairleigh and an illegitimate child and Linda Crossley—how does it all tie up with the Ealing murder?"

The inspector shook his head. It was too deep for him. Spike puffed meditatively at his cigarette.

"Perhaps it does," he said, "if we leave Linda Crossley out of the picture. She, I take it, is not the only woman who in the spring of 1919 was capable of bearing a child."

"Doesn't that leave it open to a rather large field?" the district atorney asked with a mild attempt at humor.

"Possibly. And then again it might narrow it down. Narrow it down to the other woman in the case—Maysie Ealing. Don't forget that she's Fairleigh's private secretary."

"But how—"

Spike waved them to silence. "Perhaps," he said, "I forgot to mention the other day, another little trip I made."

From his pocket he drew a newspaper clipping and handed it to the district atorney and the inspector. It was a picture of a young man and beneath it a caption: "Will anyone knowing the whereabouts of a fourteen-year-old boy resembling this photograph communicate . . . "

"Who does it look like?" Spike asked.

The two men studied the picture closely. The district attorney's brows knit in a frown of concentration.

"Someone I've seen, but I can't quite . . . "

It was the inspector, trained for many years in the police line-up, who made the identification.

"It looks a bit like that Ealing girl. Like it almost might be her brother."

"It is," Spike said.

Briefly he told of the picture's appearance in the Saugus *Index* and his own visit to the *Index* office.

"My suspicions," he explained, "were aroused by a photograph which I saw in the newspapers of Maysie Ealing herself." Thus blandly did he eliminate the necessity for revealing a certain visit—under false pretenses—to 143 West 110th Street, the day after Mrs. Ealing was murdered.

"The picture was inserted, according to the records of the editor, by"—he paused irritatingly—"by Maysie Ealing."

His audience did not grasp the significance at once, so he continued:

"It looks very much as if Maysie Ealing in a delayed attack of maternal impulse were trying to locate her long lost child. Note that it says 'a four-

teen-year-old boy resembling this photograph.' Perhaps even when the child was only a tiny baby it was obvious that it didn't take after its father, that it looked like its mother and its mother's brother. The natural inference would be that this likeness would increase with the years. Hence . . . "

He indicated the clipping.

He rose and reached for his hat. "I think," he said, "I'll be looking into this."

At the door he paused as if struck by a sudden disconcerting thought.

"Still and all," he said, "suppose all this is true. How the hell are those damn *stamps* mixed up in it?"

CHAPTER XXVI

"A BUTLER," said Spike as he lifted his feet to the district attorney's desk, "is the only thing lacking." He was reporting on his recent interview with Miss Ealing. "A sinister butler, one who's been chummy for years with the family skeleton. It's got everything else—the missing heiress, the death-dealing dagger, the nameless child, shots in the night, and the person who *knows something they're not telling.*" The last was in verbal italics.

Herschman merely grunted and the district attorney looked annoyed. "But to get back to your interview with Miss Ealing," he prompted, "what did—"

"But she's the one I mean," Spike interrupted. "The one who knows something they're not telling. The grammar's cockeyed, but the meaning's there. Maysie Ealing isn't going to tell anybody anything she isn't forced to. And even then I wouldn't be altogether too sure of her. I've never before seen such calm, convincing lying. And when she was trapped into admitting motherhood, she did it with equal calmness."

"If you ask me," the inspector cut in, "they're two of a kind, her and Fairleigh. He knows a lot he's not telling."

Spike nodded. "And he has lied with the same calm consistency."

"But even if he is or isn't the father of this child and Maysie Ealing is the mother, what," Herschman demanded, "has that got to do with two murders and an attempted third?"

"To say nothing," the district attorney pointed out, "of the theft of a small fortune in valuable stamps."

"And there," said Spike, "is where you put your finger squarely on the problem—the stamps."

"Yeah, what the hell is the idea of stealing them from Crossley if whoever did it is going to scatter 'em all over the place, afterward?"

"They're sort of a trade-mark," Spike pointed out. "When Crossley's body was found there—"

He caught himself up sharply, finished off lamely. "—there weren't any stamps about, but they had been taken from the safe. When the next victim, Mrs. Ealing, was found, there was one of the stolen stamps in her hand. And the third victim—or at least he would have been a victim if the murderer hadn't been a rotten shot—when Koenig was found there was a stamp inside the face of his watch. Find the guy who's got those stamps—" He paused and Inspector Herschman finished the sentence with emphatic conviction.

"—and you find the guy that murdered Crossley and Mrs. Ealing and tried to do the same by Koenig."

Spike nodded in sage agreement.

"In the meantime," the district attorney put in, "the circumstances seem to call for another interview with Fairleigh."

A half hour later the district attorney and his younger brother in one car, and the inspector accompanied by Mellett, a Headquarters detective following in a second car, drew up in front of the Nassau Street building which housed the office of Schwab, Fairleigh and Morrison.

Spike had been all for summoning Fairleigh to police headquarters, but the district attorney pointed out the strategic advantage of a surprise visit at Fairleigh's own office. Spike looked slightly worried as he thought of a certain comely telephone operator. Maysie Ealing, he knew, had not been at the office since the death of her mother, was not expected back at work for another week. But the telephone operator—

It would be disillusioning, doubtless, to find that one whom you had previously regarded as a person interested only in the finer things of life, was just a police department stool pigeon after all.

It was chance alone which saved them both embarrassment. The temporary relief operator was on when the three men entered the reception room of the law firm. They were shown almost immediately into the private office of Fairleigh.

The lawyer looked much the same as he had at the previous meeting two days earlier, worn, deeply troubled—and stubborn.

"I suppose," he said, and there was a grim smile on his thin, tight lips, "I should ask to what I am indebted for this honor."

"Under the circumstances," said the district attorney with equal grimness but no smile, "I think we can dispense with such a formality."

The four men seated themselves, Fairleigh behind his desk, Herschman, the district attorney and Spike facing him on the opposite side.

"Certain things have happened since we saw you last, Mr. Fairleigh," Spike began, "which have convinced us of the necessity of another interview with you. I may point out that at that time we were not entirely convinced of your—ah—"

"Honesty?" Fairleigh suggested.

"Possibly," Spike admitted, "but perhaps the better way to put it would be to say that you did not impress us as one exhibiting a helpful spirit of cooperation."

"Possibly not," Fairleigh agreed, "but may I suggest that you come to the point, if—" He cut the sentence off unfinished.

"'If any,'" Spike supplemented. "Yes, Mr. Fairleigh, there is one and quite a definite one. You see, since last we met we've had a talk with Mr. and Mrs. Polk."

In the silence that followed this statement, there was an almost imperceptible tightening of the lines around the lawyer's mouth.

"We had a talk with them," Spike went on, "and they told us about—Edward. What we want to know is, who is he?"

"He is the child of a friend of mine who died soon after his birth. The father had been killed six months ear—"

"We heard all that," Spike interrupted, "from the Polks. What we want to know now is just who he is."

"I've just told you."

"What was the name of his parents?"

FAIRLEIGH hesitated for just the fraction of a second. Then his answer came quickly. "That is something I am not at liberty to reveal."

"It seems to me, Fairleigh, that there are far too many things that you are not at liberty to reveal."

"I have always enjoyed the confidence of my clients. I feel it hardly honorable to betray it now."

"Honorable . . . a man of honor" . . . The phrase flashed again through Spike's mind. Aloud he said: "Betray. That's a good word. The one they always use, isn't it?"

"I don't know what you are talking about."

"I'm talking about betrayal and honor and all that sort of thing."

"I'm afraid I don't follow you."

"I'm talking about this child, Edward, and his mother, and at the risk of being melodramatic, I'll use your own words, Fairleigh. You betrayed her, and then refused to make an honest woman of her."

The lawyer stiffened and at the same time blinked. It was as if some one had given him a smart rap on the head. "Are you," he said slowly as if trying to make sure in his own mind, "trying to intimate that I am the father of this child out in West Albion?"

Spike nodded.

Fairleigh shook his head. "No," he said, "I'm not."

"Then why for fourteen years have you supported him?"

"That again is something I cannot tell you."

"Please say what you mean, Fairleigh. Say 'won't' instead of 'can't.'"

"As you will."

"All right. Suppose you're not the father. Then who is?"

"The father is dead."

"We've been told that several times now. What we want to know is who was he before he died."

"That again is something I—"

"—won't tell," Spike finished off. "All right, then, since you won't tell us who the father is, tell us who the mother is."

Fairleigh's only answer was an adamant silence.

Spike laughed softly. "It's all right. You needn't say anything. It just happens that we know the answer to that one."

Fairleigh's eyebrows arched in silent inquiry.

"We know who the mother of the child is. I've just been talking to her."

Suddenly the lawyer put out a wavering hand and clutched the edge of the desk.

"The mother—talking to her—herself?"

"In person."

"Then you've seen her—you know—"

"We've seen her—we know—"

"Where is she?" It was a peremptory command.

"Don't you know?"

"No. Tell me—tell me quickly."

For the second time Spike felt himself brought up short, checked abruptly in his rapid-fire questions. He eyed Fairleigh, puzzled at first, then with a strangely speculative gleam in his eye.

"Perhaps," he said, "I have made a mistake. But less than twenty-four hours ago your secretary, Maysie Ealing, admitted that she was the mother of this child."

It was Fairleigh's turn to be flabbergasted.

"Miss Ealing, my secretary, told you—that? Told you that she was the mother of this child, Edward?"

"Not under that name, naturally. She hasn't seen him since he was a baby."

"But—but that's preposterous."

"Then she isn't?"

"No, no! It's ridiculous! I can't understand . . ."

"How long have you known Miss Ealing?"

"Six or seven months."

"How come she's your secretary?"

"My old one left to get married and I advertised for a new one and she answered the ad."

"Ever see her before she answered the ad?"

"Never."

"Is she a good secretary?"

"Excellent."

"Have you any complaints to make of her?"

"None whatever."

"Didn't it ever strike you as queer that the murder of her mother should be so obviously linked with the murder of your client?"

Fairleigh hesitated. "Yes, it did."

"How do you account for it then?"

"I don't."

"Do you know of any reason why the person who murdered Prentice Crossley and stole $85,000 worth of stamps should also murder Mrs. Ealing?"

"None."

"Do you know of any reason why Maysie Ealing should claim to be the mother of a child whom you are prepared to swear is not hers?"

"I have no idea. I am as completely puzzled on that point as—"

The end of the sentence was cut off by a commotion, outside . . . a woman's high-pitched voice . . . a scrambling of feet . . .

Fairleigh stopped, listened. Spike, the district attorney and the inspector looked toward the door.

"I don't care who's there. I'm going in." A woman's voice came distinctly now through the glass partition. At the sound of it Fairleigh started violently. He rose from his chair, made for the door. Before he could reach it, it burst open. A woman, throwing off the restraining arms of office workers, rushed into the room, rushed at Fairleigh.

She saw no one else. It was as if the other three men were not there at all. She grabbed Fairleigh's arm and her voice poured forth in a torrent of words.

"Tell me—tell me now where he is—I've waited fourteen years—I can't wait any longer—now you've got to tell me—what have you done with him—my Davie—my baby—my little Davie—"

It was Linda Crossley—pale, disheveled, with a look that was half madness, half savagery in her wild, lovely eyes.

CHAPTER XXVII

"HUSH, Linda, not now!" Fairleigh's glance leaped from the district attorney to the inspector, to the crowded doorway. But the woman did not see them. It was as if they were not there. Her voice rushed on, demanding:

"Where have you kept him—you've *got* to tell me now—that was your bargain with him—you know it was—when he died—"

"Linda!" He broke in, shaking the words from her. "Quiet! I'll tell you, but not here, not now, not with all these people . . . There was alarm in his voice, as if he must stop the woman's talk at all costs.

"Get them out, then." She tore herself from his grasp, turned toward the gaping office workers. "Get out! Get out! Leave us alone." Her voice was strident, shrill.

The crowd at the doorway retreated. She turned on the district attorney and the inspector. "Get out! Leave us alone!"

Fairleigh spoke. "I think, Mr. Tracy and Mr. Inspector, if you would leave me alone with her for a few moments . . ."

"Not a chance," Herschman's voice rasped.

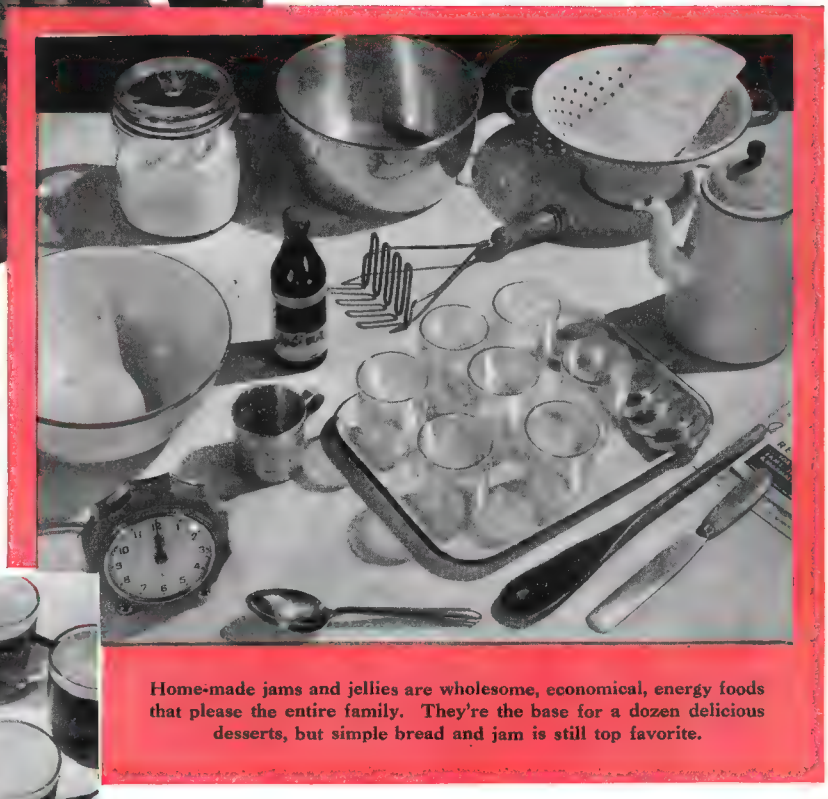
"She's in a terribly wrought-up state and I'd like. . . ."

I know what'd you'd like, but you're not going to get it. I don't trust you, (*Please turn to page* 45)

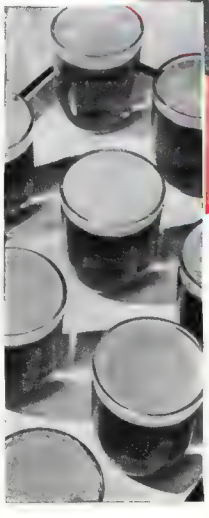
FILL THE **JAM CLOSET** IN THOSE SPARE KITCHEN MINUTES

Organize pots and pans, workable gadgets. Insure with fruit pectin, and jelly-making's a kitchen incidental

By MARY MARTIN



Home-made jams and jellies are wholesome, economical, energy foods that please the entire family. They're the base for a dozen delicious desserts, but simple bread and jam is still top favorite.



ONE of the very first rules in the book about jam and jelly-making has to do with the assembling of all the materials so that steps and tempers can be saved. Any good cook realizes that much of her success lies in her ability to organize.

It's easy and pleasant to fill the jam closet and very much simpler than ordinary canning because jams and jellies must be made in small batches at a time. If you use large quantities of fruits for the job you will only find that the cooking period takes much longer, the fruit loses its color and quality and becomes dark. So you see that it is quite possible to make a few jars at a time, much more economically, more successfully and while you are doing other kitchen mechanics. Never be a martyr to a jam pot—the jam pot doesn't like it either.

For jams, small fruits or soft-textured ones are best. The garden or market will yield you plenty of "seconds"—good fruits, but bruised, poorly shaped or slightly over-ripe. Of course, they must be free from decay, but they needn't be show-window material. But don't tackle more than three or four quarts at a time, and don't drown the natural succulence of the fruit in too much sugar.

A wire basket is indispensable when the jelly-making season is on and one of its first uses is in the cleaning of the fruit. The most objectionable bacteria is in the earth that may be clinging to fruits when you get them, and it must come off. Wash the unpeeled fruits in the wire basket, but lift it out afterwards so that no sediment will adhere.

Be sure, before you start, that you have as many modern canning aids as possible—efficient apple corers, sharp knives, fruit pectin, fresh paraffin, clean jars. There are many kinds of peeling machines on the market, some for hand, some for machine operation, but all help to cut down labor. Peaches can even be skinned via the boiling water route as tomatoes are, but be sure to plunge them into cold water immediately after. If there is fruit to be pitted, do it before the peeling operation—it's much easier.

As the fruit is peeled, drop it into a weak salt solution (1 tablespoon of salt to 1 quart of water) to keep it from turning brown before it reaches the fire. Remember especially that small batches of jams and jelly spell success, and any other large scale effort is a lazy man's economy!

Red Currant Mint Jelly

5 cups (2½ lbs.) juice 7 cups (3 lbs.) sugar
½ bottle fruit pectin

To prepare juice, crush about 4 pounds fully ripe red currants, add 1 cup water and 1 cup tightly packed chopped spearmint leaves. Bring to a boil. Simmer, covered, 10 minutes. Place fruit in jelly cloth or bag and squeeze out juice.

Measure sugar and juice into large saucepan and mix. Bring to a boil over hottest fire and at once add fruit pectin, stirring constantly. Then bring to a *full rolling boil* and boil hard ½ minute. Remove from fire, skim, pour quickly. Paraffin when jelly is cool. Makes about 11 glasses (6 fluid ounces each).

(*Please turn to page 73*)

Photograph courtesy Fifth Avenue Hotel

Pull these PUNCHES on that PARTY

Punch is festive and simple to serve. Try it on the summer crowd

By AMY VANDERBILT

A PUNCH bowl always suggests a party, somehow, and the household that owns one in which are nested a hundred or more punch glasses has the party spirit all ready to take down from a top shelf!

Of course it's what goes into the punch bowl that is important to the party. Nobody really cares whether the bowl is of cut glass, rock crystal or some nondescript something picked up from a tennis club auction, so long as it holds plenty for a thirsty crowd.

A ready bowl and a few simple ingredients plus a large supply of ice has been known to keep a party of difficult high schoolers perfectly hilarious for hours. Punch, possibly with less innocent components, is a country club standby, too, and for a summer party where guests seem to appear out of thin air it is the simplest form of liquid refreshment to serve and always a jolly one especially at any sort of dance.

With a punch very little else is needed for the party's success, from the standpoint of refreshment. A large plate of thin assorted sandwiches on the table with the bowl and glasses sometimes turns the trick neatly. And as punch drinking is a stand-up diversion the sandwich is just taken in the fingers quite innocent of plate or napkin. At more elaborate parties no sandwich plate appears with the punch bowl but a simple midnight supper can follow after the punch, and the party, is exhausted.

You can't dance the whole evening through on a hot night no matter how refreshing the punch bowl. It's fun, especially in the country, to vary the party by a treasure hunt or a game of charades. One of the most enjoyable out-door shindigs I ever went to was on the terrace of a country club and between dances the guests went treasure seeking over the grounds . . . for four magnums of champagne cleverly concealed under hedges, on the top of the flagpole, in a tree and as a tremendous climax—in the swimming pool. The "clues" were all given in verse and read off to us by a master children's story teller . . . in a very grown-up way. By the time the fourth and last "clue" came the crowd was so hilarious from jumping hedges and tumbling over rose bushes that everyone was delighted to don bathing suits at midnight and grope around the pool bottom for the last prize.

Now everyone can't give away champagne at a treasure hunt but lots of other prizes are well worth chasing over acres of country-club or a few blocks of suburban lawn. Why not a baby party with dolls and toys hidden hither and yon, or a mystery party with detective novels as the treasure to be sought. And in between the mad galloping over the turf and through the halls, the punch bowl—the friend of the thirsty—can always be waiting.

The following recipes are a little out of the ordinary, we think, and should make a summer dance, formal or informal, somewhat more of an occasion. Our recipes are all non-alcoholic but of course if you wish you can try your own experimentation in livening them up. But they are excellent just as we give them and somehow, soft drinks are much more acceptable to most people in hot weather.

Sea Foam Punch

To 1 cup of water and 1 cup of sugar, add six whole cloves, a small stick of cinnamon, a piece of preserved ginger. Boil to make a syrup. Cool.

Add to syrup 1 cup each of orange and lemon juice. Color with mint extract. Serve on chopped ice, and put a sprig of mint leaves in each glass.

Currant Punch

1 cup orange juice
½ cup lemon juice
2½ cups water
1 cup currant juice or glass of currant jelly
½ cup sugar, or little more, if desired

Make syrup by boiling sugar in water for about 5 minutes. Add juices and ice.

Spicy Punch

1 cup sugar
1 cup water
3 or 4 inches of stick cinnamon
12 whole cloves

Tie cloves in piece of cheesecloth. Boil sugar, water, and spices to make a syrup. Take out spices and cool. To the syrup add:

1 cup grapefruit juice
1 cup pineapple juice
Juice of 6 oranges and 6 lemons
Water, added to taste

Fruit Punch

2 cups sugar
2 cups water
1 doz. lemons
½ doz. oranges
1 pint grape or raspberry juice
1 pint fresh mixed fruits
1 quart tea
1 quart ginger ale

Boil sugar and water for 10 to 15 minutes to make thick syrup. Cool. Wash oranges and lemons. Squeeze out juice. Let skins stand in water for an hour and add water to fruit juice. Add mixed fruits and tea. Just before serving, add ginger ale and cracked ice. This will serve about 25.

Mint Punch

Juice of 2 lemons
1 pint cold tea
3 or 4 whole cloves
Juice of 2 oranges
1 cup granulated sugar
Crushed mint leaves

Mix and chill thoroughly. When ready to serve, strain and add one pint of grape juice (white preferred) one orange cut small, two slices of pineapple cut fine, and one quart of ginger ale. Serve with cracked ice.

Ginger Punch

1 quart water
1 cup sugar
¼ cup chopped Canton ginger
¼ cup ginger syrup
1 cup orange juice
¼ cup lemon juice
1 quart charged water

Boil water, sugar, ginger and ginger syrup for twenty minutes. Cool. Add fruit juices and charged water gradually.

Orange Ice Punch

1 pint orange ice
1 lemon
2 tbsp. bottled lime juice or 2 tbsp. lemon juice
3 1-pint bottles pale dry ginger ale (12- to 16-oz. size)

Place the orange ice in a bowl or pitcher. Add the lime juice or lemon juice and the lemon cut in thin slices. Just before serving add the ginger ale, and stir until the orange ice is nearly melted. Then serve. The orange ice may be purchased or made in an automatic refrigerator. Serves 6 to 8.

Apricot Punch

½ can apricots
1 cup orange juice
½ cup lemon juice
1 quart carbonated lime beverage
Fresh mint and ice

Put the apricots with their juice through a strainer, then add the orange and lemon juices. Pour over ice cubes or ice, and add the carbonated lime beverage just before serving. Garnish with fresh mint.

Cider Punch

1 cup orange juice
2 cups cider
½ cup lemon juice
1 cup powdered sugar
1 pint bottle sparkling white grape juice

Combine all the chilled ingredients and serve at once. Serves 5. Ice cubes may be added.

Sleuthing for Beauty

Courtesy of Krepe-Tex Rubber Swim Suits

A trip to the beach gives Pamela and Shirley new angles on Suntan and Beach Beauty

By PAMELA PINKERTON

"HI, Pam," called Shirley on the telephone. "Pack a bag and take the ten o'clock train out to the beach. The boys will meet you at the station and it promises to be a perfect week-end."

"Love to," I replied. "But even a beauty sleuth needs to know a little about the program. What about clothes?"

"Oh, a bathing suit, a sports dress, and an evening dress, will carry you through. See you soon." And she hung up.

Standing on the steps of the beach club later, I surveyed the scene with a beauty-conscious eye. This week-end I was going to have a good time and get some new angles on suntan, or know the reason why.

"Here I am, Pamela," cried my assistant, a long-limbed bronzed figure in a brief red bathing suit. She crawled from beneath a huge beach umbrella. "Come on, I want you to meet some of the most attractive girls on the beach.

If I had any doubts whatever about the vogue of suntan, they were soon dispelled. There wasn't a single soul on the beach who hadn't been toasted, or roasted by the sun's rays. And there was every shade of suntan from a mild cafe au lait to a deep mahogany.

"Tell me, Shirley," I demanded, "How in the world has everyone managed a coat of brown in such a short time. There's been only a week or two of decent weather."

"No special trick," answered Shirley, sprawling in the hot sand beside me. "But we have done something this year, which I think you'll agree is pretty smart. The first few days of swimming, everyone just saturated herself with oil, or cream, or a special lotion, and took sunbaths of half-hour intervals to insure a good tan. As one who was laid up for three days with painful sunburn and blisters last year, I took care to acquire my tan more cautiously this Summer. Now, there is no further cause for worry. I've got a good start with no danger of a bad burn.

"Of course, there are a few whose skins simply wouldn't tan. Sue, for example. She burns, blisters, peels and freckles and her skin just won't tan. But Sue uses a good sunproof cream that deflects the sun's powerful rays and helps prevent sunburn and always wears a brimmed hat and long-sleeved lisle sweaters when in the sunshine. So she plays tennis, golf, rides horseback, and swims with the crowd just the same.

"Sue's a smart girl. But Shirley, what impresses me is that women are doing something about their feet at last. Far too long we've been confronted by the sight of girls and women in bathing suits whose hands were carefully manicured but whose feet were adorned with nothing more than an objectionable callous or two. And besides . . ."

"Shirley Watson!" I exclaimed sternly. "Look at *your* feet."

"I know, I know," she retorted in mock terror. "But really, Pamela, I just haven't had time to get a pedicure."

"Nonsense, you can do it yourself. At the beginning of the Summer before you strip your feet of shoes and stockings, you should start working on them. Use the same manicure preparations you use for your fingernails. Plenty of soap and water and a stiff brush, a cuticle softener, a bleaching pencil, and liquid nail polish. It's a safe rule to use the same polish on your toenails as you use on your fingernails. And do get after those opera-pump callouses on your heels. After your nightly bath, scrub them with a coarse towel, and work in a generous amount of cleansing cream. If your feet were in very bad shape, I'd suggest a visit to a chiropodist. But they're not, and with a little attention, they can be made quite presentable.

"So endeth the first lesson," I said. "Let's dress and wander over to the tennis court. I'd like to watch the singles.

Shirley watched as I poured some cool-looking green lotion on facial tissues, then her curiosity got the better of her. "What's that for?"

"Very elementary, my dear Dr. Watson, it's simply a mild astringent with which I purpose to remove the sun oil before showering. I've no desire to ruin my new sports dress with oil stains, and this whisks away the excess oil very pleasantly.

"That solves 'The Mysterious Case of My Oil-Stained Dress.'" said Shirley as she reached for the bottle.

THE *Make-up Box*

NO OFFENSE MEANT: Perspiration is an ugly word. It's uglier when it makes its appearance on your summer gowns, and unspeakable when malodorous. The truly fastidious young woman keeps three types of deodorant handy . . . powder, liquid, and cream. Illustrated below are three on which the immaculate modern can pin her faith. There's a grand new powder deodorant in the cylindrical black-and-gold container. You dust it on while your body is still wet from a bath. It's unscented

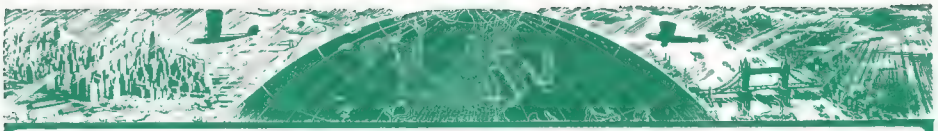
but I detected a fresh, clean new-mown hay odor that clings for hours after you use it. There's also a liquid nonperspirant in a crystal clear bottle, as well as the fragrant cream deodorant. I could write reams about all three, but when I say they fill the bill for summer daintiness, it sums it up completely.

GET A GOOD FOUNDATION: And this is sound advice whether you are buying a girdle or deciding upon the first course at dinner. But what I am so steamed up about is a foundation cream that's unlike any these sharp eyes have ever seen before. It's smooth and creamy, it blends perfectly, it gives the skin a velvety finish, and it comes in a russet shade (a rosy-beige) that covers up the first faint sprinkling of summer freckles in a way that is astonishing. And if that isn't enough, it holds face powder for hours and hours.

WHAT'S NEW? Just heaps of suntan and sunburn preparations . . . a creamy body rub that does wonders for scaly, sandpapery surfaces especially nubbly elbows and heels . . . a brushless mascara in a flip-stick container . . . a curler gadget which clasps fly-away strands and rolls them into neat little curls . . . a pearl type polish in a topaz jewel shade, very zwicki . . . Until next month . . .

Marilyn

If you would like further information about the articles described, and other beauty news, write enclosing stamped envelope to the Beauty Editor, Make-Up Box, Tower Magazines, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.



$7,500 PRIZE FOR A MYSTERY NOVEL

WORLD-WIDE SEARCH

FOR A NEW MYSTERY CHARACTER

and a writer who will create a new swashbuckling, romantic crook character. Similar characters that have become famous in the world's outstanding mystery fiction have been the immortal Robin Hood, Raffles, The Lone Wolf, Arsene Lupin, Black Shirt. Who is the next character to achieve fame among the audacious, daring rogues of history's all-time, all-star mystery fiction?

BELIEVING that the time has come for a new type of modern rogue character to be created in mystery stories, as exemplified by those lovable crooks, Raffles, The Lone Wolf, Arsene Lupin, etc., J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, Pa., MYSTERY MAGAZINE (of the Tower Magazines, Inc.) New York City, George G. Harrap and Company, Ltd., of London, England, and the *London Daily Mail*, have joined forces in a world-wide search for a crook character, and, together offer the prize of $7,500 to the author, new or old, who creates a character which the editors of the four sponsoring publishing houses will unanimously agree is worthy of taking a place among the great, lovable crook characters of all time.

No one is barred. Writers all over the world are invited to compete in this great international search for a new mystery character. The novel will be serialized simultaneously in MYSTERY MAGAZINE and the *London Daily Mail*. J. B. Lippincott Company and George G. Harrap and Company, Ltd., will publish it in book form in the United States, England and Europe.

The contest is open! The race is on! Whose name will be added to the roster of the great mystery writers of all time, in the first attempt of its kind to discover a new mystery character?

JUDGES

Carolyn Wells, the editors of the J. B. Lippincott Company and the MYSTERY MAGAZINE, of the American entries; Cecil Hunt, Fiction Editor of the *London Daily Mail*, and the editors of George G. Harrap and Company, Ltd., London, of the British and all foreign entries. The entire board of judges will pass upon the best entries selected from American, British and all foreign contributors.

CONDITIONS AND TERMS

For the $7,500 Mystery Novel Competition

1. The author of the manuscript which the judges consider most suitable for book publication and magazine serialization, shall receive within one month of the award of the prize, the sum of $7,500 as follows: $2,500 each from the MYSTERY MAGAZINE, New York City, and the *London Daily Mail*, for the first American and British serial rights, respectively; $2,500 as advance on account of royalties to be earned on the world's book rights—$1,250 on account of the American book rights by the J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, and $1,250 on account of the British book rights by George G. Harrap and Company, Ltd., London. The author will receive a royalty from the George G. Harrap and Company, Ltd., and the J. B. Lippincott Company, of 10 per cent on the published price up to five thousand copies, and 15 per cent thereafter. Other details as to cheap editions, etc., to be in accordance with the usual conditions set forth in the publishers' agreements.

2. The publishers shall control all other rights in the prize-winning book, including motion and talking pictures, dramatic and second serial, and shall pay the author 50 per cent of all sums received therefrom.

3. The author of the prize-winning novel shall agree to give the publishers the option on the first serial rights and publishing rights of his or her next two full-length works concerning the prize-winning character on terms to be fair and reasonable.

4. The publishers shall have first refusal on fair and reasonable terms of novels of suitable merit submitted to the competition, other than the prize-winning novel.

5. All manuscripts must be written in the English language, must be original and not an infringement of copyright of any other person, and must not contain matter that is libelous or scandalous. Manuscripts must be typewritten, with double spacing, on one side of the page only.

6. The competition is open to any author throughout the world. The length of each manuscript must be not less than 70,000 words or more than 100,000, and competitors should bear in mind the possibility of writing further stories embodying the same character.

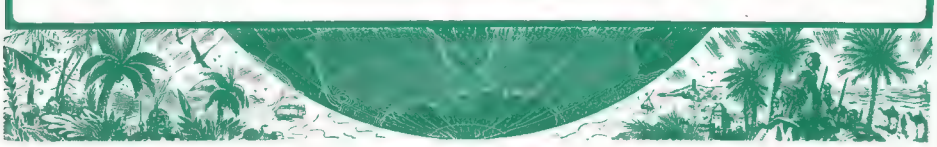
7. Sufficient postage for the return of each work must accompany each manuscript, and the author's full name and address should be attached. Parcels should be marked clearly: Mystery Novel Contest, and addressed either to J. B. Lippincott Company, Washington Square, Philadelphia, or MYSTERY MAGAZINE, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York City, or George G. Harrap and Company, Ltd., Parker Street, Kingsway, London W. C. 2, England.

8. The competition opened on December 1, 1934 and closes July 31, 1935. The winning book will be published in America and England within one year after the prize is awarded.

9. Competitors must agree to accept the decision of the publishers and their judges as final and legally binding, and, further, it must be definitely understood that neither the publishers nor the judges can enter into any correspondence with regard to entries submitted.

10. Every care will be taken of manuscripts submitted, but the publishers cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage.

11. Novels may be submitted under a nom-de-plume, if the author, for any reason, does not wish to divulge his identity.



DYING TO DYE?

Here are Bright Ideas Worth Special Mention

WHY not try a little treasure hunting in your bureau drawers this month? It's surprising how much can be salvaged through the advantageous use of a good dye. Undies that don't wear out quickly have a way of losing their interest with many launderings, even if one takes quite loving care of them. Tucked away in a corner you can always find step-ins or nighties that are just on the emergency list—that don't get worn to the bitter end, somehow, and yet you can't throw them out.

Of course, it is better psychology to step such semi-discards up to style by turning them into the *dernier cri* with a new color than by dousing them in a dye vat and making them just pink or blue or what-not. Undies have individuality this year.

One well-known dye manufacturer has discovered that, to get women to realize the possibilities of dye as a real refurbisher of wardrobes, he must give them something other than the standard colors. He couldn't afford to mix a new palette for Madame Fashion four times, or more, a year. But he has done something more interesting and we think women are going to catch on with a whoops-my-dear! He's showing us how we can take a good dress, or anything else, whose colors have become faded or post-season, and dye it *into* style.

The whole thing is done very simply and easily. First his stylists work out at the beginning of each season just what colors or shades are to be high-style. There's quite a to-do with Paris and the fashion journals to determine such delicate matters. Then the chemists work out a formula so that you may know just how to take two or more standard colors, and in what proportions, to create in a jiffy the new shade. Then into the dye go your unmentionables or what-have-you, and *voila!* you are a fashionable woman for something like a dime.

One of *the* most radical improvements that has been made in home dyeing technique is this business of selective dyeing. How it's chemically possible we don't understand. But it is pretty fascinating to be able to buy a dye that will tint one part of a garment some new fashionable shade and leave its lace trimming white, if that's the idea you have in mind. And to be able to take the color out of a dress, re-dye it a new smart color without harming the fabric is practically magical, isn't it?

Color is so important psychologically that, these days, it is positively foolhardy not to clutch at its possibilities for one's clothes and surroundings. Fresh paint and paper do the household job and good dyes can make shabbiness in curtains or clothing into style or, at least, livability. An article well and tastefully re-colored can pull itself promptly into fashion and a fine new spot in your affections.

Dye manufacturers have helpful booklets. Tower's Home Service Dept., 55 Fifth Ave., N. Y. will send you some if you write in.

(*Continued from page* 40)

Fairleigh, so now I'm going to stick around and find out for my—"

"Stop it! Stop this foolish talking and tell me where my child is—who are these men?—what do they want? —what business have—"

"Listen, lady," Herschman put in, "answer me a few questions and I'll tell you where your child is."

"You know?" She released her hold on Fairleigh and turned toward the inspector, her eyes blazing.

"Yes, I know, but first—"

"Then tell me, tell me where he is—what does he look like—I haven't seen him for fourteen years — fourteen years I've wanted him and longed for him, but he wouldn't let me see him—I haven't known where he was or who had him or even if he was alive at all—he said not until he died would I know—that was his punishment—he said I was 'bad'—when he was dead he didn't care—he said that then Mr. Fairleigh could tell me—but as long as he was alive I wouldn't know—I wouldn't even—"

"Linda! Please!" Fairleigh tried to stop her, but it was no use now. She poured forth the story to Herschman.

"Fourteen years—he must be a big boy now, almost as big as his father, and he's mine, he's all I have—but I've never had him—only once, right after he was born—just once I held him in my arms, my baby, my little Davie, and then they took him away, and I never saw him again, and he was all I had, part of me—and of David—big David—and all these years I've lived and hated and waited and wanted him dead—and now he's dead —you've got to tell me—where have you got him—he said he didn't care after he was dead—what—"

"Listen, Miss Crossley!" This time it was Herschman who shook her, trying to stem the flow of her hysteria. "I'll tell you where he is. But first you've got to answer some questions for me. First, you've—"

"No, no, tell me now—take me to him—let me see him—then I'll answer anything, do anything, say anything—but my child first—my little Davie—"

She was obsessed as only a woman can be, possessed by the urgency of her own purpose. She was like water held back, piled up, that finally bursts its dam in a wild, rushing flood that cannot be stemmed but must run its course.

Herschman relinquished her arm, defeated for the moment.

"Your child is with a family named Polk in West Albion, New Jersey. I'll take you to him and then you'll—"

She was already at the door, dragging the inspector with her, her eyes alight with a hungry, half-mad expectancy. The district attorney followed close on their heels.

IT was not until they got into the car outside that they noticed the absence of Spike and the second police car containing Mellett. But they didn't stop to investigate. The car turned its long, shining nose toward the Holland Tunnel, wound its way through the tortuous streets of lower Manhattan. Linda Crossley sat between the two men, tense, her hands in her lap gripping nothing but her own taut emotions, her eyes staring at the back of the chauffeur as if by some urgent telepathy she might increase their speed.

They turned into Varick street, started north. The road was clear and the lights were green. They sped forward. Then suddenly the chauffeur crashed on the brakes with a grinding squeal and the three in the back lurched forward.

"What the hell?"

Another car with the insignia of the New York police department had cut alongside, crowded the inspector's car over to the curb. A man jumped out. It was Mellett. He motioned to the district attorney to get out, to come with him to the other car whose curtains were mysteriously drawn.

The district attorney looked puzzled but followed him, stuck his head inside the other car.

"Philip What on earth—"

Spike held up a peremptory hand for silence. "Can it just now, Richard. Detail Mellett to go along with her and you and Herschman come back to Headquarters with me."

"But why—"

"I know it sounds goofy, but I've—well, I've got a hunch. Don't ask me what it is, but just come. You can trust Mellett to go along with her and deliver her back. Only hurry."

There was something in the terse insistency of his tone, something authoritative and sure, despite the nebulousness of the 'hunch'. The district attorney hesitated, then went back to the other car, motioned Herschman to get out.

There was a brief colloquy, swift directions to Mellett. Then Herschman and the district attorney came over to Spike's car.

"What the hell—" It was Herschman, but Spike cut him short.

"Not now, Inspector. Just do as I say without questions. We've got to beat it back to headquarters quick." The car was already in motion. As it swung away from the other one they could see the face of Linda Crossley looking back—bewilderment, question, mingling with that urgent, mad expectancy.

The three men did not speak. Traffic gave way before the screaming siren of their car. They raced past green lights and red. In ten minutes they were at Headquarters, tumbling out of the car. They didn't wait for the elevator but ran up the broad, marble stairs to the second floor.

Spike was in the lead. The other two followed, but at a slower pace. He went up the stairs two at a time. He made straight for the district attorney's office, burst it open, dashed across the room.

When Herschman and the district attorney arrived he met them at the door, on his face a look of fears confirmed.

"Look!" He pointed toward the desk.

They looked. Their faces went completely blank.

"But what is it? What is the matter?"

"Here, come close." He motioned them across the room to the desk. "Here!" He pointed to the blotter, to one of the leather corners.

The district attorney and the inspector leaned forward, peered at the tiny bit of paper that stuck out from under the diagonal of leather.

Dark blue . . . post office . . . a queen's head . . . two penny . . .

It was the two-penny Mauritius "post office" stamp, missing from the collection of the late Prentice Crossley. Its catalog valuation was $17,000.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Herschman pressed a buzzer and almost immediately Lovelace, the district attorney's secretary, appeared.

"Who's been here since we left?" Herschman demanded.

Lovelace, a quiet young man of extreme earnestness, blinked behind the heavy lenses of his spectacles.

"No one."

"No one called to see Mr. Tracy?"

"No, sir."

"Anyone been in this room?"

"No, sir."

"Sure?"

"Of course. Anyone coming in here would have to pass me in the outer office, and no one has."

"You were at your desk all the time?"

"Yes, sir. The only time I left it was to come in here myself to get a letter from the file."

"Notice anything when you were in here?"

"Anything? No." He was plainly bewildered.

Herschman gave him a curt nod of dismissal.

"Well, no one got in by that door," he said when the secretary had left, "but what about that one?" He indicated another door on the further side of the room. He got up and walked across and opened it. It led into another office, temporarily unoccupied, which in turn gave onto the hall.

"In other words," said Spike, "whoever left that stamp in here, came in that way."

The inspector nodded. His brows were knitted in a frown.

For fifteen minutes the three men sat in the district attorney's office trying vainly to explain this new and puzzling angle of an already inexplicable puzzle.

At length Herschman rose. At the district attorney's desk he picked up the stamp with a tiny pair of metal tweezers, laid it carefully on a piece of paper, which in turn he put into an envelope. "I'm putting this with the other one," he said and started toward the door.

Spike rose, too. "Listen, Inspector, let's look at that other one, the one they took from the hand of Mrs. Ealing."

SPIKE accompanied the inspector down the corridor to his office. They went in and Herschman crossed immediately to the big safe at the far side of the room where he stored exhibits. He stooped, rested on his heels and twiddled the combination knob.

"Good God!" It was Spike from the other side of the room.

The inspector paused, turned and looked over his shoulder.

"Look!" Spike was pointing to the desk, and on his face there was an expression slightly akin to horror.

Herschman shoved the envelope containing the stamp into the safe, swung the door shut and crossed quickly to the desk. It was there—another one —a tiny piece of paper that stuck out from under the leather corner of the blotter.

It was the nine-kreuzer Baden of the Crossley collection, worth $11,000.

For a moment the inspector looked from the stamp to Spike. Then he leaped to the door through which they had just come. In the anteroom outside there was a stenographer.

"Who's been in this office since I left it?" he barked.

The stenographer looked startled. "No one," she said.

"You're sure about that?"

"Why, yes, Inspector. Anyone that went in would have to pass me, and no one has."

"And you've been here all the time? You haven't left this office since I left an hour ago?"

"Why, no, of course—"

"Didn't I see you come down the hall and enter this office just before Mr. Tracy and I came in? Didn't I?"

"But that was just for a minute. I just went down the hall and around the corner to the water cooler to get a drink and I came right back."

"You entered the office just a few steps ahead of us?"

"Yes."

The inspector whirled and confronted Spike. The two of them searched the inner office with their eyes. Unlike the district attorney's office it had only one door, only one entrance, and that through the anteroom.

"In other words," Spike said, and his voice held that awed whisper of one who has stumbled on something momentous and fearsome. "In other words, someone came into this room less than five minutes ago and placed that stamp here. That means that the person we're looking for, *the murderer*, may still be in this building. Quick, Inspector, quick!"

But the inspector needed no directions. He leaped to his desk, pressed a buzzer, picked up the telephone.

"Lock all doors . . . extra squad of men on each floor . . . don't let anyone out . . . "

Commands rattled. Patrolmen rushed into the room, took their orders and were gone. " . . . men posted at every door . . . Parton and Medlin line everybody up in the lower hall . . . "

He turned and started to rush from the room. Spike grabbed his arm.

"One more thing, Inspector!"

Herschman tried to shake him off. "Don't stop me now. I've got—"

Spike jerked him roughly back to the desk. "This is important," he snapped. "Get on the telephone quick and locate everyone concerned in the whole damn case. Find out where they are—now, this minute. Don't you see?"

Suddenly Herschman saw. He grabbed one telephone, shoved a second toward Spike.

They barked names and numbers into the receivers. " . . . let me speak to Mr. Fream . . . Miss Ealing, this is the . . . Mr. Fairleigh, I'll have to ask you to . . . get Homer Watson . . . "

Spike even called the hospital and had them connect him with Koenig's bedside telephone.

They were all there on the other end of the wire—Fream, Maysie Ealing, Homer Watson, Koenig, Fairleigh.

"And Mellett's keeping tab on the Crossley dame," Herschman snapped.

"We couldn't be mistaken in their voices on the phone, could we?" Spike questioned.

"No, I don't think so, but just to make sure I'll send men around." He pressed a buzzer and another order rattled out.

Downstairs Headquarters was like a walled town under siege. Only the besiegers were within and not without. In the main rotunda on the ground floor the crowd milled about, irritated, bewildered. They hurled questions ineffectually against the patrolmen who barred all exits. Every name and address was taken, every person in the building was scrutinized, interviewed — janitors, visitors, employes, patrolmen. Some looked frightened and guilty; some were pleasantly excited and innocent. Some were outraged and insulted.

AT the end of two hours the inspector and his aides had finished their inquisition. He returned to his office his shoulders sagging. The district attorney and Spike were there waiting for him.

"Nothing doing," he said. He picked up the telephone, gave a final order. "Unlock the doors; let 'em all go." He replaced the receiver in a gesture of defeat. "Not a one in the lot you could hang anything on. It's got me down. I don't know what it means?" He dropped into his chair with an exhausted sigh.

For a few moments the three men sat in taut, nervous silence. The late afternoon sun beat in at the open window. The air was heavy with heat and humidity. Spike took off his necktie, left his collar open at the throat. Presently he rose and tamped out his cigarette.

"I'll be back in a minute," he said and went out of the office and down the hall toward the men's room.

But the "minute" stretched itself out to almost an hour. They found him finally hunched down in the bottom of one of the telephone booths in the upper hall. He was unconscious.

And inside his cigarette case they found that strangest of all philatelic aberrations—two stamps joined together, one upside down, the other right side up— a 'tete beche" . . . head of Ceres, goddess of plenty, yellowish with a vermilion background.

It was the 1-franc 1849, the most valuable "tete beche" in the world— from the Crossley collection.

(*Please turn to page* 46)

HE KILLED A THOUSAND MEN

(*Continued from page 45*)

CHAPTER XXIX

THAT night the inspector in his apartment in the Bronx slept fitfully despite the attentions of a bodyguard of two brawny patrolmen who spelled each other in standing guard before the only possible entrance to his bedroom.

Likewise the district attorney. Rather than endanger the lives of the little woman and the kiddie who waited for him at the summer residence just outside of Saugus, he spent the night in town, at the largest and most bustling of midtown hotels, personally attended by two men in uniform.

But Spike at his apartment on East 102nd Street observed no such precautions. They—the district attorney and the inspector—had urged him to follow their lead and avail himself of the protective facilities of the New York police department, but his attitude had been singularly quixotic.

"If the killer comes," he said said, and his voice trembled with unspoken menace, "I shall be waiting for him. I shall not be caught napping."

Yet that was exactly what he indulged in. From police headquarters he went directly home and took a drink, a smoke and a nap. Afterward he took a shower, his dinner and his car from the garage. It was eight-thirty when he turned it westward into the gaping white maw of the Holland Tunnel.

It was past one when he returned. He locked the door of his apartment and threw wide the bedroom window leading onto the fire escape. Then he turned out the light.

For a long time he lay looking out into the city night . . . thinking. . . . He looked at his watch. . . . Two-thirty. . . . He reached for the telephone, called a number.

"Sorry to get you out of bed at this hour, George," he said presently when the connection was made, "but I've got a story for you. . . . Yes it's exclusive with you if you'll promise to break it in the first edition tomorrow, the one that gets onto the street around ten. . . . No, no. Something that happened this afternoon at headquarters. You boys were all so busy streaking it out to West Albion that there wasn't a one of you around, so it will be a beat for you. . . ."

Spike appeared the following morning at police headquarters looking eminently fit, rested and intact. As he walked into the district attorney's office where the inspector had already preceeded him, he was met by two sets of haggard eyes whose owners had obviously spent a sleepless and nerve-racking night. They looked at him in silent, miserable question.

He flung himself carelessly into the nearest easy chair, lit a cigarette and smiled benignly on the two gentlemen in front of him.

"I did not," he said, "have the pleasure of the killer's company last night. How about you two?"

Herschman chewed his cigar and the district attorney deepened his frown. They seemed to think that their mere presence, alive and in one piece was sufficient answer.

"I did not, however, spend all of my time waiting for our homicidal friend," he went on to explain. "I improved part of the shining moments since I saw you last dashing out to West Albion."

Herschman who had been looking moodily out of the window became interested.

"I took the liberty, Inspector, of telling Mellett that I'd report to you. He's staying out there until you send him some relief and I'd suggest you do it right away, although his job's not arduous. I don't think there's much danger of Linda Crossley getting away now. I saw her and talked to her and she pretty much spilled the whole bag of beans."

"Yeah?" Herschman's eyes lighted up with sudden exasperation. "Well, go on and spill 'em to us."

"It's her child, all right," Spike continued. "Hers and David Ealing's."

"*Who!*"

"David Ealing, Maysie Ealing's brother. Remember the picture, the one that was in the Saugus *Index*?"

Both Herschman and the district attorney nodded.

"Well, that's the father of the child. She met him years ago during the War. She was doing some kind of Red Cross work, sort of got out from under her grandfather's thumb for the first time. Ealing was about to sail for France. They—well, the inevitable occurred. It wasn't just a passing affair, though. They were deeply in love. They were going to be married when he got back. But he never came back. 'Missing in action.' Old Mrs. Ealing got the notification from the War Department just five months before Linda Crossley's baby was born. That's how Linda found out. She hadn't dared have his letters sent to her house.

"They were all sent in care of his mother and sister. Maysie slipped them to her. Letters and that bayonet—a war souvenir. He sent two of 'em home, one for his sister and one for Linda. Got 'em off dead Germans probably. Anyway it was the only thing she dared keep. She had to burn his letters. Afraid her grandfather might find them. That bloody bayonet was the only memento she had of the father of her child.

"When the old man found out his granddaughter was going to have a baby he raised holy hell. Acted just like a moving picture. And I must say that Linda acted a bit that way herself. She refused to tell who the man was. No reason why she shouldn't. But that's beside the point. The old man declared that he'd never permit her to keep the child. She fought him every way she could, but the cards were stacked against her. And anyway she was only nineteen, and she hadn't a friend in the world outside of old Mrs. Ealing and Maysie, and they, of course, were on the q.t.

"Old Crossley let her see the baby just once. Then he handed it over to Fairleigh and had him put it out with the Polks. She never knew where it was. Crossley told her she never would know, until he died. Then he didn't care what happened. But she knew that Fairleigh knew.

"IN the first year or so after the child was born she was too broken down with grief over the father's death to put up much of a fight. And anyway she was only a girl at the time and frightened and scared of everything. As the years went on, though, the longing to see her child grew. Time after time she begged Fairleigh to break his word to her grandfather and tell her. But Fairleigh is one of those damnable eggs whose word is his bond. He had given the old man his promise and just as a matter of abstract principle he wouldn't tell her. 'A man of honor.' And of course there was that little matter of $50,000 in the will.

"She tried every way she could within her pitifully limited means to find out where the child was. She even went to fortune tellers. One of 'em went off into one of these fake trances and said she would find happiness in a place called Saugus. Linda looked up the town, found it was on Long Island and had the picture of David Ealing inserted in the paper. She remembered that the child had resembled his father even as a tiny baby. Maysie did the actual inserting, of course. Linda never could get away from home and the old man long enough to do it. Maysie thought it was silly but she did it to humor her. In all these years the only real friend she had in the world was Maysie. Their meetings were on the sly.

"Finally about six months ago Linda went to Maysie and said that she couldn't go on any longer, that she had to find her child, that it was the only thing she had in her life and she didn't have that. She was going to kill herself. Maysie could see the condition she was in. She knew that Linda had at last come to the breaking point and that something had to be done, so she told her that she, Maysie, would make one last desperate attempt to locate the child.

"Just then chance played into her hand. Fairleigh needed a new secretary, advertised for one, and Maysie got the job. She started staying late and systematically going through all of Fairleigh's stuff—his files, his records, trying to get into his personal safe, hoping she'd come across some memorandum of some sort that would tell her where the child was. But it was no go. Finally she had to admit as much to Linda.

"They met again in the park—the night the old man was killed."

Spike paused.

"What time?" Herschman put in quickly.

"Early. Around nine-thirty."

"How long were they there—in the park."

"About an hour. Maysie admitted that she was stumped, that she'd run into a blind alley, that she couldn't find out a thing. From what I can make out from Linda's account of the meeting she, Linda, went half crazy. She started back to the house on Fifth Avenue. Maysie wanted to go with her, but Linda wouldn't let her. She returned to the house alone, went in—"

Spike broke off abruptly. His brows drew into a creased frown as if he were thinking hard. But the inspector paid no attention. Instead he jumped into the breach.

"She went in and found the old man there," Herschman continued the story with sudden determination. "She found him asleep. She was mad crazy. She knew that when he died Fairleigh would have to reveal the whereabouts of her child. She went upstairs and got this bayonet this guy had sent her and killed him." Herschman finished off with a flourish, his eyes gleaming with triumph.

"And then I suppose," Spike put in quietly, "six days later she came back and murdered old lady Ealing, just for the fun of it."

"Sure. She's crazy. Stark, raving crazy. The strain of these fifteen years has been too much for her. It has unbalanced her mind. Crazy people are like that. They sometimes harm the ones that mean the most to them. Once she started killing, everything got mixed up in her mind."

Spike lit another cigarette, blew a long cloud of smoke into the air.

"I imagine," he said quietly, "that that is just what Fairleigh and Maysie Ealing thought."

"How do you mean?"

"Just what I said. Knowing the circumstances, knowing Linda's obsession, knowing that she was on the point of madness almost in her desire to find her child, Fairleigh and Maysie concluded that she had really tipped over the edge. That, I fancy, is why they've told so many godawful, clumsy lies on the one hand, or, on the other hand, shut up like clams and refused to talk at all. They believed that her brain had snapped, that in the first fit of madness she killed her uncle, and then killed old Mrs. Ealing and took a pot shot at Koenig. They were doing their best—although each one was working absolutely independent of the other—to protect her, to befog the issue.

"That accounts for Maysie Ealing's surprising statement that she was the mother of the child in question. She knew that if we found out the circumstances, if we knew that the child was Linda Crossley's, and that for years she had been kept in ignorance of its whereabouts, we might jump to the same erroneous conclusion that she had."

"Erroneous conclusion? What do you mean erroneous conclusion?" Herschman was slightly indignant.

Spike smiled. "I mean erroneous conclusion, Inspector. That's what it is, you know."

"I don't know anything of the kind. "Aren't you forgetting about—about the stamps."

"No, of course not. She knew the combination to her grandfather's safe. Easiest thing in the world for her to lift 'em. And then leave 'em around after she'd done in the old lady and Koenig. A nutty thing to do, but that just proves the theory. Only a person that was insane would do such a thing."

"But, Inspector," Spike put in mildly, "I'm afraid that in the heat of your theorizing you've forgotten yesterday afternoon."

For a moment Herschman just looked at him. The light went out of his eyes and his whole face sagged.

"Yeah," he admitted slowly, "that's true but—" He rose and paced the floor, his hands jammed into his pockets.

"But where," he said finally and his voice was full of angry frustration, "but where the hell does that leave us?"

"Still holding the bag," said Spike complacently. He drew in a long, deep breath of smoke, let it out slowly.

"You know," he said, half to himself, half aloud, "I've a feeling that this case is what they call the 'perfect crime'—that thing you hear about so much. And being a 'perfect' crime, it is, of course unsolvable."

CHAPTER XXX

AT the hospital Spike found Koenig sitting up in bed, his arm in a sling, reading the morning papers. Physically he seemed greatly improved, but his eyes held a look of infinite anxiety and in his voice there was reproach as he greeted his visitor.

"It is so long, my friend, since I have seen you, and there are so many things—I've had to get them all from the papers." He pointed to the morning's headlines. "Linda—tell me about her. You have seen her? She is safe? She is happy?"

Spike drew up a chair and seated himself. He smiled gently at the little round, anxious man in the bed.

"Very happy," he said quietly. "I saw her last night." Briefly he related the story of his trip to West Albion the previous evening. "She was almost beside herself with happiness. She had her child—at last."

"And what kind of a child is he? Does he love her as he should? And who are these Polk people?"

"He's a nice lad, but just at present he's naturally a good bit bewildered. He hasn't had time to love Linda as he should. She has only just been thrust upon him in the midst of a puzzling turmoil. The Polks are the kind of people who are the salt of the earth. Mrs. Polk confided to me last night that Linda was going to stay with them for a while or perhaps take a little cottage next door so that both may share the boy."

Koenig lay back against the pillows with a contented sigh. "Linda, dear Linda," he murmured. "At last. . . ."

Slowly the smile faded from Spike's face. He grew troubled.

"I'm afraid, though," he said, "that it is not going to be all smooth sailing."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I'm afraid it's going to take some hard stretching to make the police believe Linda's version of the night of June 4, the night her grandfather was murdered."

Koenig sat up in bed. Like Spike he was suddenly sober and thoughtful.

"What does she say of her where-

abouts the day Mrs. Ealing was killed?" he demanded.

"She doesn't say. I didn't ask her. I couldn't spoil those first ecstatic hours with her child. I couldn't smear them over with questions and probings and murder and suspicion."

Again Koenig was thoughtful. Then suddenly he turned to Spike.

"Look here," he said, "it is self-evident, is it not, that these murders were done by the same person?"

"Yes," Spike admitted, "I think we may safely infer that. The person who murdered Crossley is identical with the person who murdered Mrs. Ealing, and tried to get you but missed. In each of the three instances the murderer has left a trade-mark —one of the valuable Crossley stamps."

"Very well, then," Koenig went on, "what if the police *don't* believe Linda's story of her movements on the night her grandfather was murdered? What if she *has* no logical, credible alibi for the day on which Mrs. Ealing was murdered? What about the third murder—or rather I should say the third attempted murder—me?"

"Yes, what about it?"

"Why, is it not plain enough? That night, the night on which the attempt was made on my life, Linda was safe in the apartment of Maysie Ealing. She couldn't possibly have made the attempt on my life, so it must follow that she is equally innocent of the other two crimes."

Koenig finished off with a little flourish of triumph and again lay back against his pillows in great contentment. Spike rose from his chair took a turn up and down the room. At last he paused beside the bed, looked down at Koenig.

"As a matter of fact," he said quietly, "Linda *wasn't* at Maysie Ealing's apartment that night."

Koenig stared at him. "What—what are you saying?"

"I'm saying that she wasn't at Maysie Ealing's that night."

Koenig's mouth dropped open. He stared at Spike.

"But—but that telephone call?"

"That was a fake."

"A fake?"

"Yes, it was my man, Pug. He was lying."

Koenig's hands worked convulsively with the covers.

"But why—why?"

"Because—" Spike broke off. His eyes swept the white hospital room, disconcerted, uneasy.

"Look here, Koenig, we can't talk here, and we've *got* to talk. Do you feel well enough—do you think you could go home, now, today?"

For answer Koenig reached for the electric bell on the bedside table, and at the same time threw off the covers.

There was red tape and irritating details—a formal discharge to be signed by the doctor, a stiff, starchy superintendent of nurses fussing about and adding to the complications. Koenig was still a bit wobbly and Spike insisted that he go home in the ambulance. It was fully two hours before they were finally back in Koenig's little rear-of-the-shop apartment on East Thirty-sixth Street. The ambulance attendants took their leave, and Spike stowed away in a dressing alcove the bag containing Koenig's clothes brought from the hospital. Koenig himself was propped up against the high pillows of his own bed. He had dismissed his clerk for the afternoon and closed the stamp shop. They were quite alone.

"Now, my friend," Koenig said at last, "Now, go on. You were telling me—" He waited for Spike to take up the thread of the conversation they had begun in the hospital.

Spike drew up a chair and sat down beside the bed.

"I was telling you that Linda Crossley was not at Maysie Ealing's house the night you were shot, and that that telephone call was a fake. It was Pug, my man, and he was lying."

"But why should he lie?"

"Because—" Spike broke off in uncertainty. "Look here, Koenig, I know everything, the whole story, the how's and the who's and the when's. There's just one thing I don't know and that is the—" Again he broke off. He rose from his chair, kicked it away from him almost savagely and strode over to the opposite side of the room where he had laid his hat and the afternoon paper he had bought on the way up to the hospital. He snatched it up, thrust it at Koenig.

The little round man propped the page up in front of him and his eyes slowly covered the headlines.

STAMP MURDERER VISITS POLICE HEADQUARTERS

Crossley-Ealing Killer Escapes City Hall Trap—but Marks Trail with Balance of Stolen Stamps.

Koenig reached for his reading glasses on the table beside his bed. Then slowly he read the story of those three tense hours that District Attorney Tracy, Inspector Herschman and Spike had spent the previous afternoon with the wily Crossley-Ealing murderer just beyond their grasp.

When he had finished he laid the paper down slowly, folded it neatly, placed it on the reading table. He took off his glasses and placed them on top of it.

"I think," he said quietly, "I will get up and put on my clothes."

"Do you think you're able?" Spike asked, but the question seemed rhetorical. He made no move to help the sick man. Koenig retired to the dressing alcove where Spike had put the bag containing his clothes. It was a long time before he emerged, but when he did he was fully dressed. He had managed even to achieve something of his old air of the dandy despite the handicap of his cripped arm, and his steps were fairly steady as he crossed the room.

He picked up the newspaper Spike had given him, and seated himself on one of the chairs in front of the empty fireplace. He motioned Spike to the one opposite. Presently he spoke.

"Since, my friend," he began and his voice was low, and slightly hoarse, "since you say you know—everything, how—how did this happen?" He indicated the paper in his lap.

Spike smiled a bit ruefully. "That? Oh, I staged all that myself."

There was a long silence. Then Koenig spoke again.

"You were saying that you know everything. The how's and the who's and the when's?"

"Yes, everything. Everything but the *why*. That's all that troubles me. I even know all about David Ealing."

"*All* about David Ealing?" There was a slight emphasis on the first word.

Spike hesitated before answering. "No, not all. I thought perhaps you might be able to tell me—what I don't know—about David Ealing."

Another long silence. Spike waited. Presently Koenig rose and started pacing the floor, the strange, funny clumsy peasant shoes he still wore clumping with a flat dull sound as he walked up and down.

"I first met David Ealing in October, 1918." Koenig began speaking. His voice had that far-off quality of things long ago and remote, overlaid with years and tragedy.

"But first I must go back. I am fifty now. I was thirty-five then in 1918. Before that when I was still younger I had come to America to work in the New York office of a firm of Berlin textile merchants. I worked here six years—until 1914. Then I did what millions of poor, foolish, misguided German and Frenchmen and Englishmen and Russians did. I went to war.

"I had a family behind the lines in Munich. No wife or children. I've never married. But I had a mother and two sisters and a younger brother. Hugo! He was studying music. He was going to be a cellist in one of the great Berlin orchestras, and he had a sweetheart. He was just a boy—only nineteen—and he enlisted the first month. He thought going to war would be a great adventure. He was killed in the Spring of 1915.

"My mother was always delicate. She couldn't stand the civilian privations. She died the third year. Food was very scarce that third year. My sisters were nurses. One of them was killed. The hospital she was working in was shelled. The Germans weren't the only ones who shelled hospitals. The English did it and the French. We all did it. It was all part of the whole murderous debauch.

"It murdered your body and debauched your soul!" Koenig's voice rose, impassioned with the horrible memories of 1914-18.

"I went to war to kill and be killed. But I only killed. I was one of the charmed ones. I never even got what the English used to call a 'blighty'—a nice, easy wound that invalided you back to the rear, to the peace and quiet and cleanliness of a hospital, away from the bloody, stinking front. For four years I killed. I killed with bayonet and I killed with bullets and grenades and gas and liquid fire.

"In the trenches we lived in slime and muck and filth and vermin. And when we were relieved and went to the rear we lived on cheap women and rotten liquor. Our souls were caught up in that mad beastly frenzy. We couldn't live like men because men don't make war. It's only beasts that kill and mangle and torture each other. So we lived like beasts. Our souls were dead—dead, rotting and stinking like the corpses that were piled up all around us.

"And yet—" Koenig paused and his voice softened. "Yet sometimes there was a spark, a stirring beneath all the blood and beastliness. There must have been. Otherwise I would never have known David Ealing. He would have been just another one of that unnamed, unnumbered company I had killed and murdered and mutilated and tortured."

FOR a few moments there was no sound in the room. Koenig had stopped his pacing now and was seated once more quietly in his chair. Spike had lighted a cigarette, but it hung dead and smokeless from his right hand. His eyes were on Koenig, strangely fascinated.

"It was in October 1918," Koenig went on quietly. "We were entrenched east of the Meuse in the woods near Samogneux. The trenches held by the Americans were a hundred yards in front of us. Our artillery laid down a barrage and we advanced under cover of it. We struck the Americans at a weak point. We were three to their one.

"I can remember going under the wire, over the top of the American trench. We were using the bayonet. I got two of them with my first lunge down. After that, it was mostly hand to hand fighting. We cleaned them out of the trench. Then we charged the dugouts. I rushed into one. There was a man there. He raised his gun, but I raised mine first. He went down on his face, and his tin helmet slewed over on one side. It looked silly, grotesque that way.

"Something stopped me. I don't know what it was. At times like that, there's no reason in what you do. There isn't even instinct. It's just mad, silly, berserk fighting. You do things for no reason at all. For no reason at all, I stopped right in the middle of the fighting, stock still there in the dugout. I was all alone. There was a kerosene lamp burning on the table and it cast a feeble light.

"I bent over the man at my feet. He was dead. I couldn't see his face. He was lying on it, and the helmet was still hitched to his head in that grotesque way. I unfastened the strap, took it off. Then I turned the body over so I could see the face."

Koenig was silent, the memory of that poignant, long-dead moment pressing in upon him. His voice when he took up the narrative again was full of strange tenderness.

"It wasn't a man really. It was a boy. He couldn't have been more than twenty. His eyes were blue and he had hair that was blond and wavy. Just like Hugo's. Something about him reminded me of Hugo. Not only physically, but— Well, I had a feeling that he had faced the war like Hugo, light hearted, a great adventure, something glorious and exciting that would soon be over with and then he could go back to his home and his sweetheart. I wondered if this boy had a sweetheart.

"I knelt down beside him and opened his coat. My shot had gone straight through his heart. The inside of his shirt was sticky with blood. There was some on the letters and the photographs he carried in the pocket inside his coat."

Koenig rose from his chair, walked across the room to the safe, stooped down and turned the knob to the right, left, right. The door swung open. From an inner compartment he drew forth a long, heavy manila envelope tied round with cord. He swung the door of the safe shut again and walked over to the table, motioned Spike to his side.

"These, my friend," he said gently, "are the letters I found in the pocket of David Ealing the day I killed him in a dugout on the Samogneux front in October 1918. Read them."

Spike's eyes met Koenig's, then dropped to the envelope in his hand. Slowly he undid the cord. There were three letters. The writing was faded and the paper yellowed, and along the edges there were dark brown stains.

Cpl. David Ealing
29th Division—116 Infantry,
A. E. F.—France.

Spike opened the letter. Snap shots fell out. Two girls arm in arm, in strange long skirts to the ankles, wide sashes, hair puffed out over the ears. They were laughing directly into the camera. One fair, one dark. Spike walked to the window, held the picture up to the light, for it was faded and dim. Maysie Ealing and Linda Crossley—when they were young and still able to laugh. On the back there was an inscription. "Don't let any of the mademoiselles cut us out."

The second picture was the dark girl—alone. And she wasn't laughing in this one. There was a look in her eyes that even the cheap snapshot camera had caught—a look of brooding fear and loneliness—and love. On the back in the same handwriting: "I'm thinking of you—L."

Spike unfolded the letter.

"My darling David: It is very late and the house is so quiet and this is the time I like best to write to you. For in this quietness I can feel you near, I feel your dear arms. . . ."

He put the letter down. It was as if he had invaded some sacred place of the heart, had stirred the ashes of a long dead love that had perished in darkness and tragedy. He felt a shamed intruder, a vandal, but still he read on to the end.

" . . . and so, dear David, I talk to this other dear David—at least I hope he's a David—and tell him about his daddy. He stirred for the first time yesterday and it was like . . ."

At the end there was a single name —"Linda."

(*Please turn to page* 48)

(*Continued from page 47*)

Spike folded the letter, put it back in its envelope. He picked up the second letter. The handwriting was different.

"My dear Son . . . You don't know how glad we were to receive your letter and to know that you are still safe behind the lines. Let us hope. . . . Linda comes as often as she can get away from her grandfather and she and Maysie spend most of their time. . . . Did you get the socks and sweater and chocolate I sent to . . ."

A mother's letter, trying to cover the fear and dread that ate at her heart with tidbits of family gossip, the minutiæ of neighborhood life, and over it all a resolute, heart-breaking cheerfulness, pitiful in its palpable falseness.

The third letter was from Maysie.

" . . . Don't worry about anything except keeping yourself out of the way of bullets. Everything's going to be all right with Linda. She looks fine and feels fine and is thrilled about it all . . . and see if you can't get me a soldier sweetheart too. It gets awfully boring sitting around listening to Linda go on about you hour after hour. I ought to have somebody to come back at her with . . . I got a raise yesterday but prices are going up. . . . Oh Buddie dear, we miss you so. If anything should happen—but it won't, it mustn't, it can't. Mother keeps up well but I'm afraid she couldn't stand up under it if anything happened. . . ."

Spike folded the letters, put them back into the envelope and retied the cord. Koenig's voice broke through the silence.

"I read those letters for the first time fifteen years ago—in a dugout in France—beside the body of David Ealing with the whole bloody, stinking war crashing and yelling over my head. I've read them many times since.

"After the war I went into business in Berlin. My one sister who was left, married and moved to Austria. I was alone. I made money. But my life was very ugly and bitter and tasteless. That's what war did to those that came out of it with their bodies whole. Their spirits were warped and twisted.

"I used to get out those letters and re-read them. Of all the men I'd killed he was the only one I'd ever known. And I felt that I did know him.

"It got to be an obsession with me. David Ealing and those letters there. It ate into my empty life until I couldn't stand it any more. I had to know the end of the story—the story in which I had played so big a part. So I came to America. . . ."

KOENIG had risen now. His back was to Spike. He was standing with his feet wide apart, his hands clenched, his head thrown back gazing at the wall as if the tragic drama was recreated on its blankness.

"And so I came to America. I found out where Linda Crossley was living. I found out where Maysie Ealing was living. Maysie and her mother. I never told them who I really was. I hid behind the mask of a kindly old stamp dealer and I won my way into their hearts. And I found out the end of the story.

"Tragedy hadn't stopped with him. When I killed him, I killed three other lives, too. His mother, old, demented with the shock of his death, living and yet dead. His sister, fading, growing old, supporting her mother, unable to leave her, to go to England to her sweetheart. Oh yes, she'd finally gotten herself a sweetheart. It was about six years after the war. A young English chap was over here on business. They fell in love, desperately, irrevocably. But they couldn't marry. She couldn't leave her mother to go to England, and he couldn't leave England to come here. He had younger brothers and sisters. Both of them tied, separated with responsibilities, eating their hearts out, getting older all the time.

"And then there was the third life—Linda. Ah, sweet, lovely, Linda, my child! Ruin, desolation! Your little David, the only thing you had left of your great love torn from you. Never, never to see him as long as that old vulture lived. Never to know where he was or what he was like. Slowly going mad with the weight of your own aching tragedy.

"And I—I was responsible. I had killed him. If I hadn't it never would have happened. He would have come back. He would have married Linda. And Maysie would have married her English boy. And old Mrs. Ealing would have been a placid, contented grandmother, and life would have been happy. But *I* had sown tragedy and desolation. *I* had ruined them.

"But there was a little hope left—something might be saved—something of happiness and contentment. For the old woman, no. Death was best for her. And so I killed her. And now her daughter can marry the man she loves before it's too late and she's too old. And I killed Crossley, so that Linda can have the child she loves, before it's too late and she's too old.

"You may say that I am demented, mad myself. But you're wrong. What I've done, I've done with the cool, hard light of reason. I don't believe in an avenging God or a torturing hereafter. I don't believe in the false ethics of man-made laws. I believe in the rational here and now.

"I've rescued the happiness of three people. I've redressed as best I could the wrong I did when I put a bullet through the heart of David Ealing in a French dugout fifteen years ago.

"I'm your murderer. I'm a murderer many times over. I've murdered hundreds and thousands. And each time I've sown desolation and tragedy. Each time—except the last two. Take me! Destroy me! You can't hurt me now! I am content!"

CHAPTER XXXI

CLEVER, Koenig, damnably clever." There was something almost of admiration in his voice. "But not quite clever enough. You fooled me for a long time, but not quite long enough. You had me guessing, but not—"

Koenig held up his hand for silence. The hand trembled slightly. "Please," he said. His voice was low and very hoarse. "If there are any questions—you would like to ask—I will answer them—but, please—no gloating—"

"Why shouldn't I gloat?" Spike put in impatiently. "I beat you at your own game, Koenig, and a damnably clever game it was. And it would have worked too if Linda Crossley hadn't thrown a monkey wrench into the works."

As the girl's name was mentioned, Koenig turned suddenly, faced Spike.

"You do not think after all I have told you that she had anything to do with—"

"No, no. Don't worry about that. I know she's innocent. I'll tell you here and now that Linda Crossley has been at my house on Sark Island every minute until last Saturday morning when she left and went straight to Fairleigh's office and then to West Albion. But you didn't know that. And you didn't know that I was hep to you a long time ago. I was hep to you but I didn't have any proof. And then you murdered Mrs. Ealing and I got an idea. An idea I thought would force your hand.

"I fixed it up with my man Pug to pull a big lie on you, to make you think that Linda had left early the morning Mrs. Ealing was killed. I wanted to make you think that there was a possibility that suspicion would be thrown on her for the Ealing murder too. I thought if I aroused your fears enough on her behalf, you'd break down and confess. But you didn't.

"So I had you up to my place a second night for dinner. Remember? And I pulled a second fake on you—that telephone call that was supposedly from Maysie Ealing. Well, that was my man, Pug, again. I'll confess that I didn't, at that time, quite see to what extent your cleverness would take you. I thought you'd go to Maysie Ealing's, find out Linda wasn't there and then come rushing back to my place. I was prepared to tell you some more lies. I was even going to tell you there was a warrant out for her arrest. I thought surely that would bring you around.

"But you were smart—at least you thought you were smart. It would have been smart too, if Linda Crossley really had been at Maysie Ealing's. Sticking one of those stamps in your own watch crystal and then winging yourself at midnight in the Park. A superficial flesh wound, so that you had strength enough before you fainted from loss of blood to sling the gun out into the middle of Central Park lake.

"And that letter beforehand to Linda just in case. . . . Oh, your whole scheme of a self-inflicted wound was clever. But it was your undoing, Koenig, your undoing. With you safe under the covers in the hospital I had a chance I'd been waiting for for a long time. A chance at your shoes, those funny, clumsy, peasant shoes. I slipped 'em out of the locker where they were kept in the hospital and I brought them home with me and went to work on them, and finally I found that very ingenious little hollowed out space in the left heel, and in there the three remaining stamps from the Crossley collection."

Spike paused in his agitated pacing. He stood over Koenig, looking down on him, exulting in his own triumph.

"Taking those stamps, Koenig, was pure genius. I understand it now. They were to be your incontrovertible alibi. No one would accuse a stamp dealer of taking such great rarities."

"Just a moment." Koenig again held up his hand in interruption. It was steadier now, but his voice was still hoarse with emotion. "There's one thing I would like to know. How did you 'get hep' to me, as you say? How did you know?"

"I didn't *know*—at first. I just had a hunch—and I played it. Something you said that night when you were telling me about Fairleigh. You said he was 'a man of honor.' You said it contemptuously. I asked you if you were a man of honor, and you said, 'No, thank God—but I have my own code.'

"I sat up for a long time that night just thinking about the implications of that remark. It was that—and your shoes. Those funny, clumsy shoes, and you such a dandy. I got a wild idea and I decided to try it out. That's why I pulled all that stuff with Pug and the fake telephone calls. I just had a hunch then, but I've *known* ever since last Friday when I got hold of your shoes."

Koenig was looking straight into the triumphant eyes of the man who had beaten him, trapped him at his perilous game. There was something in his unflinching gaze that cut off the spate of words.

He picked up the bayonet and the letters and held them out to Spike. For a moment Spike only looked at him. His brows wrinkled in a puzzled frown. Koenig pushed the objects toward him impatiently.

"Here, take them."

"But—what for?" Excitement and triumph were halted before bewilderment.

"For evidence, for exhibits," Koenig explained losing patience. "For evidence before a court. Isn't that what you're after? Isn't that what you want? For your brother—a conviction?"

A moment of silence. Then Spike spoke.

"You—you have me all wrong." He spoke slowly. He had not yet recovered from the emotions of the moment before and he was still dazed with the sudden transition in his own mood. It was as if he were feeling his way through the words.

"You've got me all wrong. I wasn't after—evidence. If the things I've done since last Friday seem—well, crazy, it was only to make sure that—that—"

He broke off. Impulsively he grabbed Koenig's two hands in his.

"Koenig, you damn fool, don't you know I'm a damn fool myself? Don't you understand that all I've done since last Friday was done just to make sure the police would never get wise? I was dragging a few red herrings of my own across the trail. Don't you see?

"I was jockeying for a chance to throw them completely off. And then yesterday it came quite unexpectedly. Linda Crossley crashed into the picture. I thought she would stay put at Sark Island. But she couldn't. When she got stronger, she got to thinking about her child and she went crazy. She had waited fourteen years and she couldn't wait any longer. They couldn't hold her—Mrs. Parsons and Pug. That's why she crashed into Fairleigh's office yesterday.

"I hadn't expected that. I knew with her out of hiding I'd have to act quickly—so I did. I pulled a fast one. Two or three fast ones—all those monkeyshines with the stamps. I did all that you know—sticking stamps around hither and yon, pretending I was beaned on the head and knocked out. Don't you see? I was just proving to them that you and all the other people involved couldn't possibly have had anything to do with the case. Don't you understand?"

It was Koenig's turn to look bewildered.

"Then why—all this—today?"

"Why? That's why—the why. I knew the how's and the who's and the when's. I wanted to find out the why's. If I've seemed a bit—well, overbearing in my self-satisfaction, it's just that I'm a lousy winner."

As he spoke he picked up the letters from the table.

"I love to play games and I love to win and when I do I'm insufferable. It doesn't make any difference what the game is—poker, tennis, murder, tick-tack-toe. I'm unbearable when—" With one swift movement he tore the letters across. "—when I win. Forgive me, Koenig! And forgive my poking my nose into your private affairs. I'm funny that way, I guess." Another swift tear. "I've always been insufferably curious." Tear, tear. "Just plain nosey I guess you'd call it."

TINY scraps of paper trickled from his hands, formed a heap on the hearthstone. He stooped, lit a match, touched it to a corner. Flame licked at the little heap, enveloped it in miniature fury, left a small mountain of ash.

He rose, dusted off his knees. "Of course," he said and grinned, "all this is—ah—immoral. Most immoral! Letting the dastard go scot free. One of the things that just isn't done in our best detective stories, but then—" He shrugged his shoulders in indifference to the orthodox technique of crime and punishment.

He picked up the bayonet. "I'll be taking a boat ride tomorrow out to Montauk Point," he said significantly.

He reached for his hat and stick. At the door he paused.

"If you're ever out my way, Koenig, be sure and let me know. We'll go fishing."

Test Eyesight Regularly

The Blackboard Problem—as it looks to Jim and as it looks to Bill

BILL failed in arithmetic. He couldn't add blurry figures that wouldn't stand still. Poor vision is a tough handicap to a child in school. At least one in every ten has some form of defective eyesight.

A Special Warning

Contrary to a widespread idea that the Fourth of July has been made "safe and sane," the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness states that the toll of accidents from fireworks was greater last year than in many previous years.

Many of these uncorrected defects are progressive and cause increasing eye-strain and impairment of vision. Eye-strain may lead to severe recurring headaches, nervous exhaustion, hysteria, insomnia, dizziness and other disorders.

In older people there are other conditions of the eyes which are far more serious than imperfect vision. If untreated, they may eventually lead to blindness. Glaucoma and cataract can be present and in the first stages give little indication of their threat to your sight. Recognized early, glaucoma may be successfully treated; a cataract may be removed by an operation.

Good reading habits of young and old prevent many eye troubles. Have your eyes examined regularly, even though they seem to be normal. Never wear glasses which have not been prescribed. Don't read with the light shining into your eyes, or without your doctor's consent when recovering from serious illness, or when lying down—unless your head and shoulders are propped up and the page is held at right angles to your eyes below the line of vision. Hold your work or book about 14 inches from your eyes.

Don't use public towels or rub your eyes. Conjunctivitis and other communicable diseases may follow. Do not use any medication for diseases of the eyes unless it has been prescribed for the purpose.

Make sure that no member of your family is endangering his sight. Send for the Metropolitan's free booklet "Care of the Eyes." Address Booklet Department 735-B

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

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THE CLUE OF THE JUMPING BEAN

(*Continued from page* 13)

out of the smoke and roar of giant blast furnaces. Up there on the hill, in the house just visible among the stately trees, a girl lay dead, brutally murdered. She had borne the mighty name of Mackinson less than a year, and there was dynamite in the tragedy of her end. We turned in and rolled up the shaded drive to the house.

WE were sincerely welcomed to the house by Sheriff Eben Loman. The sheriff was a hill man, slowspoken, honest and conscientious. Distressed and overawed by this case, uncertain how far its ramifications might lead, he had decided on direct appeal to the Department of Justice in Washington; and the Department, uncertain enough itself, was quick to render aid. Sheriff Loman took us directly to the scene of the crime, accompanied by Mrs. Clapper, a quiet, grim woman who served here as housekeeper.

"Right here is where the body was found," he told us, pointing morosely to a bloodstained rug before the fireplace in a sitting-room situated at the rear of the house. It gave on a sunny easterly terrace, yet was a gloomy room, I thought. The whole house was gloomy, a huge brick building rather on the Georgian side, ivy grown, deeply shaded by tall pines and thick cedars, a monument erected by the first Mackinson, in old age, in the country of his birth.

Loman went on, "Mr. Mackinson, the husband of the deceased, was in the library at ten o'clock last night. He was alone. All the others had already gone to their rooms. They heard the sound of a car starting up suddenly and going down the drive out of the place all speed. Not long after there came a loud scream. It was just like somebody being killed, they say. Mr. Mackinson jumped up and ran out of the library. Mrs. Clapper came rushing downstairs. They met in the hall. They couldn't tell what had happened; they lighted all the lights and searched the house. They came on Mrs. Mackinson lying right there. Her head was cut and neck was twisted—broken, the coroner said."

There were other details. The silver candlestick, for instance, which lay against the brass guard rail of the fireplace; from its position it probably had fallen from the dead woman's hand as she made a last desperate effort to defend herself. A French window leading on the terrace outside was open as when the crime was discovered.

Max asked thoughtfully, "Mrs. Mackinson evidently hadn't retired. How was she dressed?"

Mrs. Clapper made quick answer. She was a broad, formidable ramrod of fifty or so with unflinching opaque eyes. "Mrs. Mackinson had on the same simple dress and jacket of Shantung silk she had worn all evening."

"Were she and her husband on good terms, Mrs. Clapper?"

The woman shrugged. "Good enough, I should say. I'll be frank and tell you that there had been a quarrel yesterday. It was no different from any other first-year spat. Jealousy and all that. They were both young."

"Where's young Mackinson now?"

"He's upstairs. Resting."

The sheriff said bluntly. "He's drunk."

Max raised an eyebrow. "We'll go rouse him out," he said.

Gilbert Rose Mackinson lay snoring in a darkened room. A half empty bottle of Bourbon rested on a sidetable. Max looked at the couch, then went around pulling up Venetian blinds with a clatter, admitting sunlight. He took the young man by the back of the neck and a shoulder and violently sat him erect in the bed.

Mackinson was dazed, speechless, nerve-racked. Normally, no doubt, he was a polished young plutocrat of twenty-four, with every mark of expensive upbringing, a little priggish, a little peremptory, highly selfish and spoiled, at times appealing but too well insulated within his own ego to have any real understanding of other people. He sat up in bed, and his slender, sensitive hands trembled as he tried vainly to tap a cigarette on one exquisitely manicured thumbnail.

Gilbert Mackinson's parents had died during his adolescence, and the family holdings were all tied up in a trust. There were other connections in the clan, but this was the sole heir in direct line. At present his fortune was reputed to be comparatively small, but on reaching thirty this young man would take over control, for better or for worse, of that empire of Steel which had influenced the course of destiny of a dozen American states. Even now a hostile Senatorial committee in Washington was conducting an inquiry behind closed doors into the devious roots and branches of the corporate Mackinson power. Its vast armament and munitions trade had made it an influence in the balance of world peace—sinister or benign, as you inclined to believe. It was a delicate, a crucial moment. No one could be sure what lay behind the murder of a Mackinson.

Before he would answer a question, Mackinson demanded a drink. He needed it. "They can all tell you the story," he said sullenly to Max. "I haven't the least idea how it came to happen. Perhaps my wife heard a sound, investigated, and surprised a burglar. Maybe a kidnaper. We heard somebody hurry off."

"So they've told me," said Max. "Were you drunk at the time, Mackinson?"

"Drunk? Certainly not!"

"Sure about it?"

Mackinson snarled, rather ineffectually, "Ask Mrs. Clapper."

Mrs. Clapper said grimly, "Mr. Mackinson had been to town earlier and had evidently taken a few drinks."

Max said, "Come on downstairs, Mackinson. I want you along. I'm going to have a look at the remains."

This was one department of Max's work in which I utterly failed to share his quiet, dispassionate and quite zealous interest. The body lay on the library lounge, covered by a sheet. The coroner had called, made the merely cursory examination the case required, and ordered the dead girl removed here.

Mrs. Mackinson had been nineteen, a beauty of soft silken brown and pastel tints of pink and rose. She was of middle stature, delicate of structure yet gracefully mature of figure, fine of feature and of hands and feet. But it is impossible to describe a beauty that is gone. I had seen her picture in the papers, and I knew. The sight here was horrible and heart-wringing, if the two terms can be coupled.

Max said casually, "Mrs. Mackinson had a sister, hadn't she?"

Sheriff Loman looked nonplussed, but both Mackinson and Mrs. Clapper looked as if taken unawares, as if taking stock before replying. Mackinson said, "Why, yes. She did. In Baltimore."

"What's wrong with her?"

"Wrong?" Mackinson moistened dry lips.

"I didn't come here, you know, without advance information from Washington. Your family is not obscure exactly. You can save time by being frank with me."

Mackinson essayed a jaunty shrug, but spoke reluctantly. "Noreen Davies is a twin sister to my wife. She's a mental case under medical care. She developed symptoms of schizophrenia at seventeen and became subject to recurrent attacks of very erratic behavior. After my marriage we found it necessary to place her in the Walker Neurological Institute for observation and treatment."

"Have you notified the hospital of this?"

"Not yet."

Max hesitated. "Were there any similar symptoms in her sister?"

"None whatever. It's not congenital, you know. The girls were of a local family. I've known them both on and off, during my stays here, for a number of years. Noreen's condition was diagnosed as resulting from some severe psychic which we've never determined. When she's rational and might help, she won't talk to anybody about it."

I saw Mrs. Clapper's eyes narrow involuntarily with emotion.

Max pondered a moment, his thoughts unreadable, then went to the library desk and busied himself swiftly writing. He addressed two envelopes. In one he put a few papers, in the other the loose wad of bills from Loveland's court. He took me outside to the hall, handed me the sealed envelopes and gave me instructions for their disposal. The money, directed, as he had promised, to the Culver County Hospital, was to be mailed from the postoffice in Glen Laurel, a town twelve miles west. There was an airport just outside Glen Laurel, and I was to hire a plane and pilot, and hand the pilot the second envelope with instructions to deliver it as quickly as possible at the Identification Unit, Division of Investigation in Washington. I asked him why, what was up?

"It's a random and irrelevant bit of business, but I want it rushed through," Max said noncommittally. "I doubt we'll be here long."

"You do? Does it click already?"

"Fairly well. But I'm not through yet. It's fourth rate mystery, but . . . well, I'm glad I'm here. Now hurry along."

I HURRIED. I was not so rash as to sally forth in the Dusenberg, but instead borrowed a Ford station wagon, thus avoiding likelihood of arrest on the way. I completed my mission at the expense of some cash but little trouble, saw a fast plane go winging off to Washington, and was back at Cedar Hill inside an hour.

I found Max, in company of Sheriff Loman, walking about outside the house, studying the grounds. The estate was typical of a certain type of luxurious American country home, with garages, stables, cottages for the help. A sister and some small nephews of Mrs. Clapper occupied one of the cottages out of sight of the main house; Mrs. Clapper lived with them whenever the big house was vacated and closed.

Max was restive, preoccupied. He had been busy during my absence, but to no result of consequence, I gathered. He had gone all through the patient routine of taking fingerprints, both from inanimate surfaces and from living fingers, comparing and analyzing them under the magnifying glass, and learning nothing that wasn't obvious already. There were no mysterious, unclassifiable prints to betray a prowling killer. Max was skilled at this kind of work, as all special agents must be; he had along with us the standard equipment: glass, flashlight camera, divers dusting powders, black, white, silver for metals, dragon's blood for neutral surfaces.

"How about marks on the body?" I asked. "What do they suggest?"

Max led us back into the house by way of the gruesome sitting-room. "There were marks suggesting strangulation," he said. "Death must have occurred when the victim and the killer toppled over, and the victim struck the fire guard rail with terrific force, enough to break the neck and kill her instantly. The violence suggests a man, and a considerable amount of passion. Curiously, aside from the scalp wound, the skin is nowhere broken, even on the throat where the killer took a powerful throttling grip. What would that suggest to you?"

"Gloves!" I said promptly. "That would also account for the absence of fingerprints."

"It *would* suggest a professional burglar surprised in the act," Max allowed. "We know there was an intruder, because of the car that fled."

Sheriff Loman said soberly, "I've had my men checking up about that car. They've phoned in, and they can't find word or trace of it."

"Find that car," I said, "and you'll close your case."

Max smiled a little grimly. "Maybe! But don't forget that the scream everybody heard came *after* the flight of the car. The car didn't carry away the killer. He escaped on foot. Or else he's still here."

Neither the sheriff nor I had any comment on that. It suggested too ghastly a conclusion. Max entered the sitting-room and after a brief survey around, got down on hands and knees and examined the floor, the rug, everything in the neighborhood of the fireplace all over again.

I made guarded inquiry of the sheriff about John Skyras. Loman snorted and opined that we'd get no help from him, if that's what was on my mind. If the man had any information, he'd figure on a way to profit by it. Discounting the natural prejudice of a hill man for an outlander—Skyras was only six years in the county—the sheriff made out a pretty bad case. He was a Greek, it was believed. His past was unknown. He had come quietly enough into the neighborhood, opening a small restaurant in Gentry. But he had expanded into bootlegging and gambling during prohibition, and thence into local politics. His unscrupulousness and cunning combined with a free use of ready money and subtle intimidation, had made him boss of Gentry and master of most of the intrigue and shadowy connivance in the county.

Max left off his examination, dusting his hands. He said in deep preoccupation, "I'd give a great deal to know the nature of the psychic shock that unsettled Noreen Davies' mind. It must have been severe. It's very unusual for one twin to go into a major collapse without the other. That is, if they are identical twins. It's an odd case."

"What do you mean, identical?" I asked.

"Well there are two kinds of twins. The fraternal type— all boy and girl twins are fraternal. They are simply two people who happened to be born at the same time. Identical twins are of the same sex, alike in every detail. They result from a not very clearly understood accident whereby the single individual planned by nature divides itself into two, very early in its existence. The likeness between the two, physical and emotional, is often pretty uncanny. If one developes a tumor, the other will have one also, almost invariably. If one twin lands in prison, it's a safe bet the other will presently land there too. They're really not individuals, they're each one-half of a weird human entity."

"So what?" I inquired.

"I'm merely wondering. I once read of a case of schizophrenia admitted to the Boston Psychopathic Hospital. When the doctors learned the patient was a twin, they made inquiries—and found that the patient's twin sister was in another hospital for the same condition. It's an odd angle, that's all. Odd that this shock affected only one."

(*Please turn to page* 52)

"Doctor, how do Skin Faults first Begin?"

AN INTELLIGENT QUESTION AUTHORITATIVELY ANSWERED—

1 What causes Lines?

Lines result when the *under* tissues grow thin and wasted, and the outer skin does not change correspondingly. It falls into tiny creases—the lines you see. To help this condition, the nutrition of the under tissues must be stimulated.

2 Are Blackheads just Dirt?

Blackheads are due to clogged pores. Most often, this clogging comes from *within the skin*. Overactive glands give off a thickish substance that clogs the pores. The tip of this clogging matter dries. Darkens. Collects dirt. Proper cleansing will remove the blackhead. Rousing treatment of the under tissues will prevent further clogging of the pores.

3 What makes Blemishes come?

"Blemishes" are the final stage of blackheads. They form when the clogging accumulation in the pores presses on the surrounding *under* tissues and causes inflammation. They are avoided by removing the blackheads that cause them. When blemishes are many and persistent, a physician should be consulted.

4 Do Coarse Pores come from Neglect?

Pores are naturally smaller in some skins than in others. They become enlarged through being clogged and stretched by secretions from *within the skin*. They can be reduced by removing the clogging matter and keeping the skin free from further clogging.

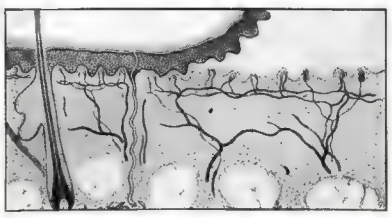
5 Is Dry Skin a Sign of Age?

All skin, as it grows older, becomes thin and dry, as the *underskin* loses vigor and the glands produce less oil. Dry skin is helped by the use of penetrating oils and by restoring the oil glands to normal activity. Excessive dryness demands medical care.

6 When do Tissues start to Sag?

Rarely before 30 to 35. Then the rounded contour is lost—notably in neck, chin and cheek line, and under the eyes. Here the skin sags, due to loss of tone in the fibres *underneath* the skin, to fatty degeneration of the muscles, failing nutrition of the underskin. To avoid sagging, keep the under tissues toned.

Mrs. Richard Gedney says: "Pond's Cold Cream leaves my skin fresh, smooth. I am never bothered with blackheads or blemishes."



The Underskin—where Skin Faults begin

If you could see through the epidermis into your underskin, you would discover an amazing network of tiny blood vessels, cells, nerves, elastic fibres, fat and muscle tissues, oil and sweat glands! On these depends the beauty of your outer skin. When they grow sluggish, look out for blackheads, coarseness, blemishes, lines—wrinkles!

Keep *Under Skin* Active

to keep Skin faults away

YOU SEE, from the authoritative answers above, skin faults do have one thing in common—they practically all begin in your *underskin*.

No matter what the fault, its important needs are keeping the *under* tissues vigorous and the skin *clean*.

Through these two means, Pond's Cold Cream has cherished the beauty of the most fastidious women in the world—for Pond's actually softens lines. Wards off blemishes, blackheads. Makes coarse pores less conspicuous. Firms aging tissues. Softens drying skin. It does these things by means of its deep-skin cleansing and its invigorating effect on the *under* layers of the skin.

EVERY NIGHT, cleanse deep with Pond's Cold Cream. Its specially processed light oils sink deep, flush away every particle of dust, make-up, skin impurities. Cleanse again, patting the cream in briskly to rouse the circulation, stimulate the oil glands, invigorate the newly cleansed tissues.

IN THE MORNING and in the daytime, freshen with Pond's. You will be rewarded with the satiny texture that holds make-up evenly—the radiance of a skin kept clean and invigorated to its depths!

Try this a few days. The coupon, with 10¢, will bring you enough for nine treatments.

Pond's Cold Cream is absolutely pure and germ-free.

MRS. GEORGE BOLLING LEE of VIRGINIA

beautiful and distinguished wife of the grandson of the illustrious General Robert E. Lee, says: "Pond's Cold Cream completely erases lines, keeps my contour firm and lifted. I use it every night to cleanse my skin. It seems to lift dust and grime right out of my pores."

Mail this Coupon—**for Generous Package!**

POND'S, Dept. G48, Clinton, Conn.

I enclose 10¢ (to cover postage and packing) for special tube of Pond's Cold Cream, enough for 9 treatments, with generous samples of 2 other Pond's Creams and 5 different shades of Pond's Face Powder.

Name_____

Street_____

City_____ State_____

Copyright, 1935, Pond's Extract Company

Like Chocolate?

...Then make genuine Ex-Lax your Laxative

A treat to your taste—and gentle, painless, safe relief from constipation

WHAT'S the most popular flavor in the world? Chocolate... of course! Everybody loves its deliciousness.

So, when occasionally Nature demands the assistance of a laxative, take yours in chocolate. Take Ex-Lax. Not only because it is pleasanter to take than some nasty-tasting cathartic. But because it is mild—gentle—safe. Because doctors, nurses, physical trainers recommend it... and use it themselves. Because for 28 years it has proved its merit.

Don't punish your palate with unpleasant tasting cathartics. Don't punish your system with harsh ones.

Enjoy safe, gentle relief... by taking just a little piece of delicious chocolate with the word EX-LAX stamped upon it. You must look for the "EX" to get Ex-Lax results. 10c and 25c boxes at any drug store.

When Nature forgets—remember

EX-LAX

THE CHOCOLATED LAXATIVE

THE CLUE OF THE JUMPING BEAN

(*Continued from page 50*)

A new and different angle struck Max, and he ordered us upstairs. He wanted our help in a thorough search of the dead woman's personal effects in her room. The house was quiet; no one was in sight as we went up the broad stairs.

Max, who was leading the way, stopped suddenly near the top with a warning gesture. I peered over his shoulder—and beheld Mrs. Clapper inside the dead woman's bedroom, swiftly and intently gathering into her apron a variety of articles; pieces of apparel, a miniature portrait, a small book, various feminine gadgets and vanities.

Max ran up the rest of the stairs and entered the room, saying softly, "I requested that nothing be disturbed, Mrs. Clapper."

This formidable woman was not to be so easily routed; she stood firm, gazing at us with sudden hatred. "These thing by rights are mine. Mr. Bradley. Aileen Davies was more to me than mistress, she was a friend since she was a little girl. She told me these things were mine."

"I don't doubt you for a second, but this haste is unseemly, Mrs. Clapper. I must ask you to put those things on the bed."

Mrs. Clapper stood stonily by while Max delved among the collection on the bed. He passed over everything else to examine a small leather bound volume shut fast by a small golden hasp and lock. He took from his pocket a small gadget much like a jack-knife except that its blades were cunning hooks and locksmith's tools; it opened the lock promptly. A sheet of paper fell from the book as Max opened it, and I picked it up. It was cheap notepaper on which was pasted a series of printed words cut from a newspaper, all forming a strange communication indeed.

Warning! Your husband is coming around, but you are stubborn. You know what it means. Unless you withdraw your opposition, your husband will be told all about the money you got the year before your marriage and a lot about how you came by it, which will interest him plenty.

He has been told already a few little things, just for a sample. You have seen how crazy jealous he is. He is not likely to believe that money innocent money. You are warned. This is the last time.

I looked at Max, and he said, "Hm!" with his eyebrows arched. I glanced at Mrs. Clapper, and her eyes were big with the effort of trying to see what we were examining. Max handed her the document, saying, "Know anything about that?"

"I do," she said bluntly, after reading the message. "I can at least easily guess. People have been after this estate for a long time. There's coal here and it's never been worked. It'd be cheap and profitable to mine. The mineral rights are all tied up in the land deed. Mr. Mackinson was sometimes tempted to sell, but Mrs. Mackinson held out against it."

"Who sent this warning?"

"That I can't say."

Max asked a number of questions about the young heir, and Mrs. Clapper answered, but with the grudging taciturnity of an old retainer. Yes, Gilbert Mackinson had been drinking heavily. He had even been abusive to his wife in jealous rage. Mrs. Clapper declared that to her own knowledge he had no just cause for jealousy, and that the sinister reference in the warning must be sheer fabrication. She knew nothing about any money, she said.

The Mackinsons, it appeared, had spent most of their time here since the marriage. They had little formal social life. It was young Mackinson's habit to tear about the countryside in his car, frequenting strange places and consorting with odd folks indeed. One place was the Hotel Holly in Gentry.

Sheriff Loman interrupted to add, "John Skyras owns the Holly and a pretty fly and sporty lot of men hang around there. I've heard tell that Mackinson has brought Skyras and his gang home with him now and then."

"Skyras has been here," admitted Mrs. Clapper.

"Why," asked Max, "with his means, has Mackinson remained in this neighborhood so long?"

"Because this is the only piece of ground he owns outright," Mrs. Clapper said. "He hasn't the means you think. He's squandered so much money these past three years that he's been hard pressed for cash."

Max dismissed the housekeeper, shaking his head. The woman was a hard one to figure.

Max now set mysteriously to work bringing out fingerprints on intimate objects around the room which would naturally bear marks made by the occupant of the room. There was a black perfume flagon. A playing card. A cold cream jar. He placed beside these a sheet of paper on which he had taken prints of the dead woman's fingertips. He gave them all prolonged scrutiny.

"Tommy, check these for me," he requested, handing me the magnifying glass. "You too, Sheriff."

I compared the various prints. The little I know I've picked up from Max, but the similarity was evident, naturally. The dead woman had handled these things, had lived and breathed in this room.

"Sheriff, round up Mackinson," Max directed. "Mrs. Clapper again too. Bring them to the library. I have an experiment to try."

MACKINSON looked a little improved when he walked gingerly into the library. His eyes were still bloodshot. Mrs. Clapper was as iron as ever. Max closed the door, then went to the desk and took up the telephone. He asked for long distance and a connection with the Walker Neurological Institute in Baltimore.

Connected, Max made formal demand for information about Miss Noreen Davies. He was evidently questioned as to his right to such information, and forced to a tone of peremptory insistence. The conversation then turned monosyllabic. Finally—"Why on earth didn't you notify the family immediately? You didn't want to alarm them? You hoped to intercept her? Well, I'm afraid you're doomed to disappointment. If she was as rational as you say, she was not likely to fall right back into your hands. No, I don't feel at liberty to discuss the case further, but I suggest you send a representative to Cedar Hill by tomorrow."

Max swung around in the chair and looked at all of us. There was a frozen, apprehensive silence.

"I have something rather shocking to announce," he said quietly. "I don't know to what extent it's news to you. But that is not the body of Mrs. Aileen Mackinson under that sheet. It's Noreen Davies' body."

I promptly suspended all normal reactions to such a statement. I was familiar with Max's devious ways, but this was beyond me. The dead woman had been identified, both personally and by fingerprints.

I looked at Gilbert Mackinson. His jaw was slack. He stared in a trance at the form on the lounge. I suddenly realized that the young man had yet to view the body with full and unflinching gaze. He had avoided the ordeal earlier. But then Mrs. Clapper, the stoic, had made positive identification!

(*Please turn to page 54*)

DIET PROBLEMS of THE STARS

Conducted by DR. HENRY KATZ

"I AM a constant reader of NEW MOVIE and always read your 'Diet Problems of the Stars,' conducted by Dr. Henry Katz.

"Here is my problem. I am about twenty or twenty-five pounds overweight, and have been on a doctor's diet for about a year, with no encouraging results. I have taken such things as 'saccharin' in place of sugar, 'thyroid' for my glands, cut out sweets, white bread and starchy foods. As I work as a hostess in a tea room, this requires will power, as we see plenty of pastry, good food, etc.

"I am only five feet, three inches, and 29 years of age.

"Would it be possible for you to write out a diet for me to follow? Something within reason, as I must work in the meantime."

A person can be made to lose weight simply by adhering rigidly to a proper diet. Such things as thyroid extract are of no value, unless controlled by one who knows how to use it.

A girl of your height and age should weigh about 124 pounds. Once you have reached this weight and maintained it for a while by adhering to your diet, you will find it easier to stay at that constant weight.

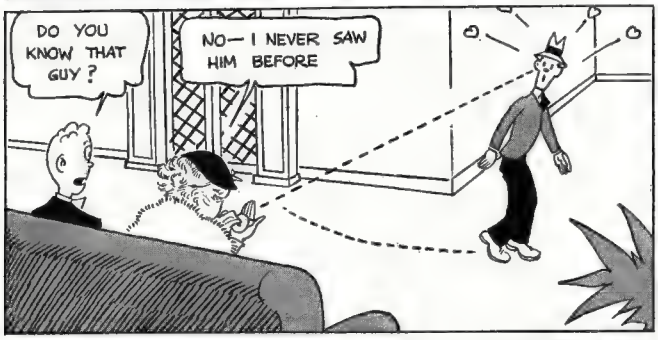
The cardinal principle of a reducing diet is that your calorie intake be less than the number of calories your body uses in the course of a day, so that your body is obliged to burn its excess flesh—fat. This object is attained, as I said by a diet low in calories—a diet in which your intake of starchy and fatty foods is cut as much as possible.

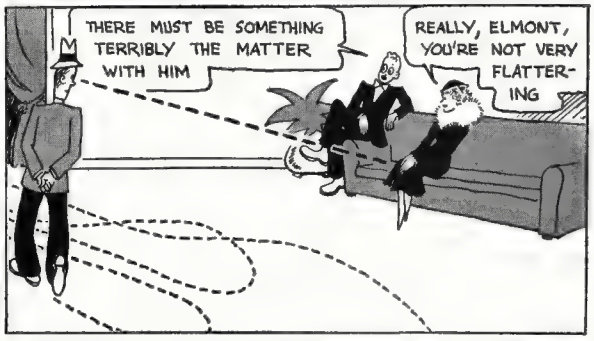
I am including here some low-calorie diets.

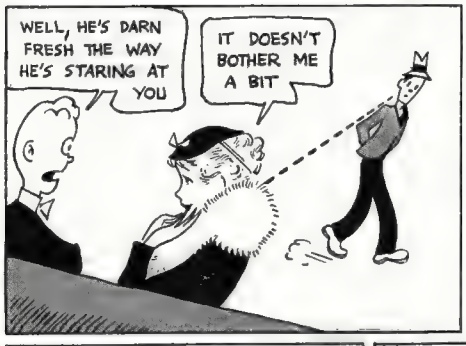
Breakfast
Fresh Peach Omelet Thin Slice Toast
Skimmed Milk
Luncheon
Clear Soup
American Cheese Orange Salad
Bran Roll Milk
Dinner
Tomato Consomme Broiled Fish
String Beans Celery Cole Slaw
Raspberries with Cream and Sugar
Black Coffee

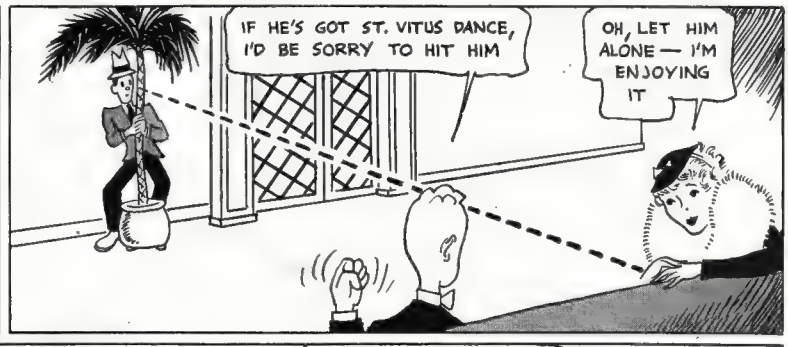
Breakfast
Huckleberries with Sugar, Whole Milk
Cornflakes with Sugar, Skimmed Milk
Bran Muffin Butter Clear Coffee
Dinner
Fruit Cocktail
Roast Chicken Celery Squash Salad
Black Coffee American Cheese
Supper
Clear Soup
Chicken Salad Bran Muffin Cauliflower
Lemon Ice Tea

CUTIE — ANYTHING TO AVOID A SCENE









Men can't take their eyes off you when you wear the new bright Cutex Nails . . .

If you want excitement, try the new Cutex Coral, Cardinal or Ruby Nails. The Cutex lustre will keep you in the limelight! And, remember, the 7 lovely Cutex shades are created by the world's manicure authority. They're absolutely *fashion-right*. Cutex flows on smoothly, without blotching. Stays on for days and won't peel, crack or chip. In two forms now—Crème or Clear. The Crème hides nail blemishes. Get the whole Cutex range of colors tomorrow, at your favorite store! Northam Warren, New York, Montreal, London, Paris

CLIP COUPON BELOW FOR SPECIAL COMBINATION OFFER

Mail 14¢ with this coupon

Now a lipstick to match every shade of Nail Polish . . .

Natural Lipstick
Natural, Rose and Mauve Nail Polish

Coral Lipstick
Coral Nail Polish

Cardinal Lipstick
Cardinal Nail Polish

Ruby Lipstick
Ruby Nail Polish

Perfect harmony between your lips and finger tips from now on! Cutex now gives you 4 lipsticks to match or tone in with your nail polish.

They're grand quality. Ideally creamy—without being greasy. Permanent, but not a bit drying. They go on beautifully. Natural, Coral, Cardinal, Ruby.

Northam Warren Corporation, Dept. 5-Z-7
191 Hudson Street, New York City

I enclose 14¢ for the new Cutex Manicure Set which includes one shade of polish and 3 other manicure essentials, together with sample of matching lipstick, as checked below.

Natural ☐ Coral ☐ Cardinal ☐ Ruby ☐

Name_____

Address_____

(but the person she cheats is herself)

SHE cheats herself out of good times, good friends, good jobs—perhaps even out of a good marriage.

And all because she is careless! Or, unbelievable as it is, because she has never discovered this fact:

That socially refined people never welcome a girl who offends with the unpleasant odor of underarm perspiration on her person and clothing.

There's little excuse for it these days. For there's a quick, easy way to keep your underarms fresh, free from odor all day long. Mum!

It takes just half a minute to use Mum. And you can use it any time — even after you're dressed. It's harmless to clothing.

You can shave your underarms and use Mum at once. It's so soothing and cooling to the skin!

Always count on Mum to prevent the *odor* of underarm perspiration, without affecting perspiration itself. Don't cheat yourself! Get the daily Mum habit. Bristol-Myers, Inc., 75 West St., New York.

MUM
TAKES THE ODOR
OUT OF PERSPIRATION

ANOTHER WAY MUM HELPS is on sanitary napkins. Don't worry about this cause of unpleasantness any more. Use Mum!

THE CLUE OF THE JUMPING BEAN

(*Continued from page* 52)

Max walked to the lounge and stripped the sheet from the body. "Gilbert Mackinson—is this the body of your wife?"

Mackinson came near. A horror gripped him. Mrs. Clapper stood without expression.

Suddenly Mackinson uttered a hoarse, "My God!" He knelt beside the lounge. He looked into the dead face, fingered the blood spattered silk of the light dress and jacket.

"This isn't her!" he cried. "I've never seen this dress before. This isn't Aileen. My God, *this is Noreen!*"

Max's voice cut like a whiplash. "Did you kill her, Mackinson?"

Mackinson sprang away. "I did not! I know nothing about this, I tell you. You've been trying to frame me since you arrived." He whirled on Mrs. Clapper. "Where's my wife? You knew this wasn't her. What's happened to my wife?"

Mrs. Clapper took an instant or so to decide that denial was useless.

"Your wife has gone away."

"Where? Who with?"

Anger, the first emotional response we'd seen, suddenly shook the formidable frame. "With no one, you fool! Don't you think it would be enough for any woman to get away from you? I have no idea where she is by now. You were so drunk last night you had no idea what happened. This was the final blow. She would have killed you or herself if she stayed here."

"You mean she's disappeared?" he demanded. "She wanted me to think her dead?"

"She preferred it. She knew Noreen must have escaped. We made up the story of a burglar. The car that raced away was plainly the car that brought Noreen here from Baltimore. You can thank your wife that you weren't arrested immediately for murder."

GILBERT MACKINSON'S nerves failed him. He covered his face with his hands, swaying on his feet. Max came to him, jerked the hands away.

"Steady! Out with it now. What do you remember?"

"My God," sobbed Mackinson. "I don't remember anything! It's all mad confusion. I was drunk. I didn't think I killed anybody. I don't know. I must have been insane."

Mrs. Clapper said steadily, "I saw him come rushing out of the sitting-room like a maniac. When I went in I found Miss Noreen lying there. I thought then it was her sister, but Mrs. Mackinson rushed in right after. I kept Mr. Mackinson out of the room, away from her. He was out of his senses, and I was afraid."

"Why didn't you call a physician?"

Mrs. Clapper shrugged. "There was no use. The girl was dead. I did what Mrs. Mackinson wished."

"I see," Max said gravely. He came near to Mrs. Clapper, looked her in the eye, and said, "Don't you think it'd be just as well now if you went and brought Mrs. Mackinson back here, since this is becoming a process of law well beyond anyone's control?"

The cold eyes flamed once again and the lean nostrils flared with defiance and battle. But logic ruled. Her firm shoulders wilted a little. "I despaired of her doing this with any success from the first. But she was too wild to deny. She's hiding in our cottage."

"So I judged when we found you collecting belongings to bring to her," said Max. "Assure her that her feelings will be spared as much as possible."

After Mrs. Clapper departed, we all looked at Mackinson cowering brokenly in a chair. Eben Loman said, "Up our way, people that gets into a thing like this usually finds themselves lynched. Do I put the irons on him, Mr. Bradley?"

Max brooded a second. "Wait!" To the young man he said, "Mackinson, talk straight now! To whom were you selling this estate? To Skyras?"

"No. Probably to Interstate Collieries."

"Has Skyras bid in on it?"

"He didn't offer enough."

"But he persisted?"

"He pestered me. I owe him some money. I lost a hundred and fifty in a whiskey deal with him. He told me afterwards it was crooked, and he's insinuated threats about it."

"He's still trying to get the place then?"

"Yes. Aileen balked. She refused to sign. He's kept at me. I don't know what I'll do."

Max turned to the sheriff. "I saw some luminal tablets in a bathroom cabinet upstairs, Sheriff. Take him up and let him have a good dose of it. He badly needs either a drink or a sedative, and he'll want his wits about him too much today to fool with liquor."

Mackinson got up in response to the sheriff's command. He shambled to the door.

"I must have killed her," he said in a creepy and rather memorable tone of voice. "I can't remember. I suppose I did. I was insane. Drunk! Oh, God . . . *Noreen!*"

The sheriff half supported him out of the room.

I said to Max immediately, "I'm reeling, man! Is that really Noreen Davies? After the fingerprints you showed me?"

"I was merely demonstrating why some of us are detectives and some not." Max smiled faintly, gravely. "I had just that moment learned, Tommy, that the dead girl in the library was not the same as the one who lived in the room above. I'd already told you that twins are uncannily identical in feature and detail. But not even in twins does the fingerprint system fail—if you are an expert and look closely enough. And if you're forewarned. I was, and I looked till I found the minute, almost invisible discrepancies that told the story. This pair of prints was remarkably alike, even for identical twins."

"You were forewarned," I protested. "You had no reason to suspect a substitution."

"Then apparently I was the only person around here to note that the murdered Mrs. Mackinson, so called, was wearing no wedding ring of any kind when she died."

I gave up.

We were still awaiting the return of the others when the door opened and an unexpected intruder strode into the library. It was, of all men, John Skyras, and with him were two constables. On the swarthy face was an unpleasant expression of triumph.

"So!" he purred. "You are here; how nice. I receive the news that a car is on the Mackinson place like your car. I come to find out. And how lucky I am—you are both here!"

"You're too modest, Skyras," said Max dryly. "It's not all luck, surely. It's your remarkable gift of deduction, I'm certain."

The two officers pounced on us. Max did not resist, so I perforce submitted. We were disarmed, held.

Skyras walked close to Max. "Where is the money?"

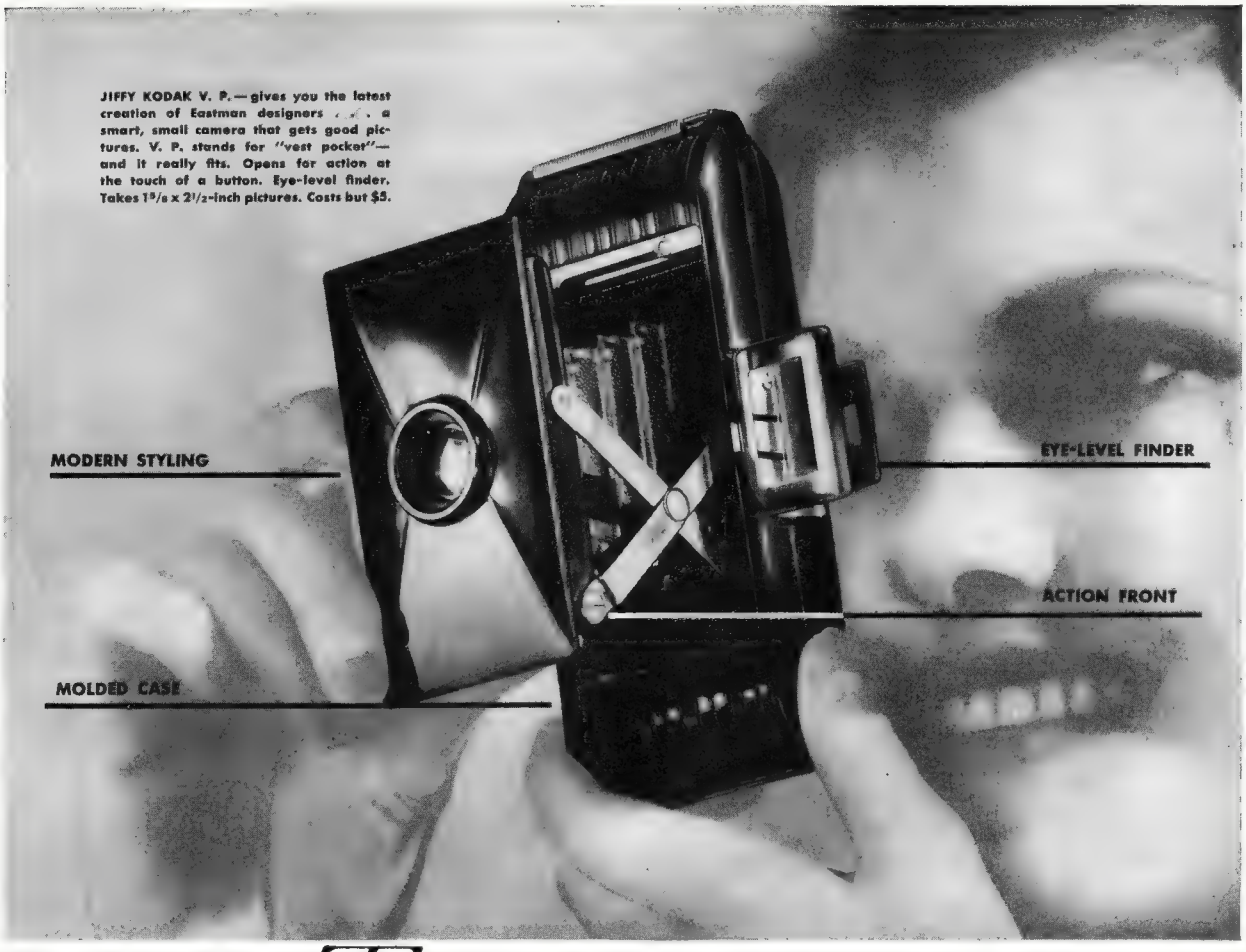
"All gone," said Max, shrugging. "I got rid of it. Gave it away, in fact."

Skyras grunted, and then swung a lightning, heavy fist into Max's face. Max dodged, but not quickly enough. The blow caught a corner of his jaw, and Max went down, ending up on the floor beside the lounge.

He crouched there. I saw the yellow lights of murderous rage in his pupils. But Max smiled.

"You know, the more I see of you, Skyras, the more pleasure I get out

(*Please turn to page* 56)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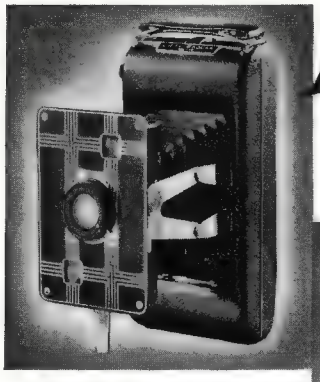

These newer Kodak features

show what your old camera lacks

JIFFY KODAK—It works so fast it had to be called "Jiffy." Touch a button—"Pop"—it opens. Touch another—"Click"—it gets the picture. It's the folding camera that works as easily as a Brownie. Extra smartness in its etched metal front and leather-like finish. For 2¼ x 3¼-inch pictures, $8. For 2½ x 4¼-inch pictures, $9.

YOU SIMPLY CAN'T SHOW your picture-taking ability with an out-of-date camera—any more than you can show your driving ability with an obsolete car.

Older cameras simply don't measure up to 1935 standards. Look at these new models. Check over their features. To their other fine points, add better lenses and shutters than you could ever before buy at the price.

Get behind a new Kodak or Brownie and find how skillful you really are. See for yourself what infinitely better pictures you get. Your dealer has the model you want. Kodaks from $5 up; Brownies as low as $1. What other pastime will give you so much for so little? . . . Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N. Y. . . . *Only Eastman makes the Kodak.*

BROWNIE—Old reliable of the picture-making world. The finest models ever, called the Six-16 and the Six-20, have the clever Diway lens for sharp pictures of near and distant subjects. Extra-large finders. Six-16 Brownie makes 2½ x 4¼-inch pictures, costs $3.75 . . . the Six-20 makes 2¼ x 3¼-inch pictures, costs $3.

WITHOUT EXTRA CHARGE. Beautiful Prevent-Tarnish Chest or Tuck-Away, regular $5.00 value.

RICH design, substantial silverplate, satin finish! It looks expensive. It has all the features of expensive silverware, including the smart new Viande* Knives and Forks. Yet the price is so low!

Never has there been such luxurious quality in an inexpensive service!—Only $21.50 for a service for six. Burgundy, Guild, Paris or Mayfair are equally moderate in cost. You will save money no matter which you choose.

Cream Soup Spoons, Salad Forks, Butter Spreaders and many other necessary pieces are available in all Wm. Rogers & Son patterns.

And now, at these prices, every woman can afford a "guest" set of silver—for those occasions when she uses only her best linen and china!

*REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

LOOK FOR THIS MARK 1S A GUARANTEE OF QUALITY

WM. ROGERS & SON
ORIGINAL ROGERS SILVERPLATE
INTERNATIONAL SILVER CO., MERIDEN, CONN.

THE CLUE OF THE JUMPING BEAN

(*Continued from page* 54)

of that five hundred dollars."

"I finish your pleasure, by God!"

Skyras drew his revolver. His big frame shook with fury. Max laughed, but came to his feet, wary, watchful.

And it was just at that point that Sheriff Eben Loman entered the room.

The sheriff looked excited, shocked, but he stopped suddenly, looked at the newcomers, and anger gathered swiftly. "Here, here, Skyras! What do you think you're doing? Put that gun away."

"You keep away, Sheriff! I make an arrest of this man."

"You're making a dumb fool of yourself! I take jurisdiction here, and you'll arrest nobody. That man is a ——"

Skyras shouted, "I give not one good damn who he is! I arrest him!"

The sheriff's jaw set. He jerked forth a long barreled revolver from under an armpit. "You'll put up that gun, by God, John Skyras!"

Skyras gazed at him, moistened his lips, and slipped the gun silently into his pocket again.

"Now!" said the sheriff. He walked to the lounge and drew back the sheet. "There's been murder done here. If you've got anything to say, say it quick or get out!"

Skyras stared at the gruesome sight. His eyes protruded. The two constables looked suddenly panicky.

Max Bradley gave a little start, and said, "Just a moment, gentlemen." He went to a bay window that looked out on the grounds and driveway. A car was approaching. We heard it stop, and the door slam. Max, with a pleased, eager expression, went to the library door and waited.

The newcomer was a crisp, matter-of-fact young man who looked like a competent young bank examiner or attorney. He cast a single non-committal glance around the room.

"Got something for you, Bradley," he told Max. "It's pretty hot. An old inactive file, too. I flew up, to save time."

"We'll have a look," said Max.

THEY sat down together at the desk, spreading out a number of documents brought by the stranger. All prior matters were suspended. Skyras, puzzled, somberly furious, bided his time under the watchful, grimly patient eye of Sheriff Loman.

I felt a tremendous curiosity. I knew where the stranger had flown from. This was a man from Washington.

The issue was still undecided when Mrs. Clapper returned. With her was Aileen Davies Mackinson, a pale, heartsick counterpart of the lifeless figure on the lounge. She wore a flowing dress of black crepe without a single ornament. Her large blue eyes looked from one to another, and the only change that came into their fixed, opaque stare was when they rested on John Skyras, and then they gleamed with the fires of hatred.

Mrs. Clapper promptly demanded. "What's that man doing here?"

"I'm none too sure myself," Sheriff Loman said grimly. "But it's up to Mr. Bradley whether he stays or goes."

Max looked up quickly. "He stays. Emphatically he stays."

Aileen Mackinson said suddenly. "I can't stand that man in my house!" Her breath was short with desperation. "I can't endure him here. Please send him away!"

Max went quickly to her. "Mrs. Mackinson, your best interests will be served if you let me be the judge of this."

"But he's the fundamental cause of all this tragedy. It's all in consequence of his doings, his cruel and deliberate plotting."

"Suppose you tell me about it."

She struggled for composure. "I'll tell. Gilbert lost a half million dollars in the past two years, playing the market and backing reckless ventures. He's tried to get money from the trustees, but they won't give him any; he can't touch the estate for years yet, and he's deeply in debt. This man knows it and he has led Gilbert on. He has tried to ruin him and he's never let up trying."

"This is a lie!" shouted Skyras.

"It's the truth!" Aileen Mackinson retorted passionately. "You've worked for years to get him in your power. You want this land, to begin with. You've tried to get your clutches on the millions that will come to him some day. There is no limit to your greed."

"He is a drunken fool, your husband!"

"You've helped to make him! You poisoned his mind. You lied to him about me. You invented a past for me until he was insane with jealousy. Why did he strike down that innocent girl? He did it because of the lies you told, lies you made him believe about me, his wife. You murdered my sister, John Skyras!"

Mrs. Clapper moved suddenly and took the distraught girl in her protecting arms. The older woman's face was a picture of vindictive loathing. "That's God's truth! That man gave Aileen Davies money to provide medical care for her sister, before this marriage when the girls were alone in the world and penniless. She was young and desperate and she accepted an older man's free offering, but she made the mistake, out of pride, of keeping it a secret. Now this man stands prepared to tell about that money he gave her—and to charge that it was neither free nor unearned! He's threatened that, and you have the proof, Mr. Bradley!"

"This goes far enough!" raged Skyras. "I can tell plenty things here that are truth, by God!"

"There's no need to!" Mrs. Clapper cried. "I know all you have to tell. It's time for telling, and time your dirty secrets were taken from you, John Skyras. Gentlemen, that man and I alone here know this story. Gilbert Mackinson broke down and told me one day in his soul's torment, and in some maudlin moment he was fool enough to tell that man too. Noreen Davies was in love with Gilbert Mackinson. Ever since she was a little girl and he was the dashing young beau of the countryside. He didn't fail to see his opportunity; he took advantage of her intense affection when she was little more than a child and he made her his. I needn't speak more plainly; Gilbert Mackinson's cruel selfishness is too well known. He did that, and he went away, and when he came back again he had lost interest and it was the sister he went after, without shame or human feeling. And when that sister kept him at a proper distance he persisted until he finally married her. And that's the story and the shame in this house!"

"Oh!" said Aileen Mackinson in anguish. "Oh, *no!* My Noreen . . . not my Noreen!"

"You didn't know, child, and no one dared tell you, least of all poor Noreen. She was a child in love, and suddenly she lost her lover. She was a twin who had grown up with her sister—and suddenly she lost her sister too. She knew she'd never have either one again as long as she lived. She couldn't stand it, and her poor broken heart found a way of escape. Her mind went back to childhood where she'd been happy, and it stayed there."

My blood ran cold with the horror of the thing, the repellent ugliness of the human motives suddenly revealed.

In the shocked stillness Sheriff Loman cleared his throat. "I have something to tell you. I was side-

(*Please turn to page* 58)

"Only in Kotex can you find these 3 satisfying comforts

CAN'T CHAFE • CAN'T FAIL • CAN'T SHOW

Three exclusive features solve three important problems every woman faces. I explain them to you here because there is no other place for you to learn about them."

Mary Pauline Callender

Author of "Marjorie May's 12th Birthday"

Can't chafe

To prevent all chafing and all irritation, the sides of Kotex are cushioned in a special, soft, downy cotton. That means lasting comfort and freedom every minute Kotex is worn.

Can't fail

A special center layer is in the heart of the pad. It has channels to guide moisture the whole length of the pad—thus avoids accidents. And this special center gives "body" but not bulk to the pad in use. No twisting.

Can't show

Now you can wear what you will without lines ever showing. Why? Kotex ends are not merely rounded as in ordinary pads, but flattened and tapered besides. Absolute invisibility always.

I'VE always felt that the real facts on this intimate subject were withheld from women. So here I present information every woman should know.

I realize that most sanitary napkins look pretty much alike. Yet they aren't alike either in the way they're made or in the results they give. For only genuine Kotex offers the 3 exclusive features that bring you the comfort and safety you seek. And with Kotex now costing so little and giving so much, other kinds are really no economy.

Remember, the Kotex absorbent, Cellucotton (not cotton), is 5 times as absorbent as cotton. It is the identical absorbent used in the majority of our leading hospitals. Women who require extra protection find Super Kotex ideal. For emergency, Kotex is in West Cabinets in ladies' rest rooms.

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No wonder thousands are buying this truly remarkable Kotex sanitary belt! It's conveniently narrow . . . easily adjustable to fit the figure. And the patented clasp does away with pins entirely. You'll be pleased with the comfort . . . and the low price.

WONDERSOFT KOTEX

Try the New Deodorant Powder . . . QUEST, *for personal daintiness.* Available wherever Kotex is sold.

IT MAY BE THE COLOR OF YOUR FACE POWDER!

By *Lady Esther*

Did you ever stop to think that the shade of face powder you use so confidently might be altogether the wrong one for you?

It's hard to believe that women can make a mistake in their shades of face powder or that one shade can make you look older than another. Yet, it's only too obviously true!

You know how tricky a thing color is. You know how even a slight variation in color can make a startling difference in your appearance. The same transforming effect holds true in the case of face powders. Where one shade will have positively the effect of making you look young, another will, just as decisively, make you look older—*years older than you are!*

Face Powder Fallacies

Many women look years older than they actually are because they select their face powder shades on entirely the wrong basis. They try to match their so-called "type" or coloring which is utterly fallacious. The purpose in using a shade of face powder is *not* to match anything, but to bring out what natural gifts you have. In other words, to *flatter!*

Just because you are a brunette does not necessarily mean you should use a brunette or dark rachel powder or that you should use a light rachel or beige if you are a blonde. In the first place, a dark powder may make a brunette look too dark, while a light powder may make a blonde look faded. Secondly, a brunette may have a very light skin while a blonde may have a dark skin and vice versa.

The sensible and practical way of choosing your face powder shade, regardless of your individual coloring, is to try on all five basic shades of face powder.

I say "the five basic shades" because that is all that is necessary, as colorists will tell you, to accommodate all tones of skin.

My Offer to the Women of America

"But," you say, "must I buy five different shades of face powder to find out which is my most becoming and flattering?" No, indeed! This matter of face powder shade selection is so important to me that I offer every woman the opportunity of trying all five without going to the expense of buying them.

All you need do is send me your name and address and I will immediately supply you with all five shades of Lady Esther Face Powder. With the five shades which I send you free, you can very quickly determine which is your most youthifying and flattering.

I'll Leave it to your Mirror!

Thousands of women have made this test to their great astonishment and enlightenment. Maybe it holds a great surprise in store for *you!* You can't tell! You must try all five shades of Lady Esther Face Powder. And this, as I say, you can do at my expense.

Just mail the coupon or a penny post card and by return mail you'll receive all five shades of Lady Esther Face Powder postpaid and free.

(You can paste this on a penny postcard) (14) **FREE**

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Please send me by return mail a liberal supply of all five shades of Lady Esther Face Powder.

*Name*_____

*Address*_____

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(If you live in Canada, write Lady Esther, Toronto, Ont.)

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THE CLUE OF THE JUMPING BEAN

(*Continued from page* 56)

tracked." He hesitated. "I doubt you'll have more worry from Gilbert Mackinson."

Max Bradley gave a start of dismay. "Good God! I should have known."

"He went to the bathroom for the medicine you told him to take," said the sheriff. "He was only there a minute. I was waiting for him when I heard him fall. He was making choking sounds in his throat. I ran in and grabbed him, and he passed away right there in my hands in convulsions. There's a lot of white froth in his mouth."

"Cyanide!" Max breathed. Even he was a little stunned. "He was well prepared for the moment."

The others were speechless. But I could see in every eye, except that of Aileen Mackinson, whose face was hidden on Mrs. Clapper's shoulder, the quick hot light of speculation. This was news that would flash around the world. Aileen Mackinson was still as a statue, until all at once she gave a little moan and her knees buckled beneath her.

It was Max who caught her, and Max who commandeered one of the constables to carry the girl upstairs where Mrs. Clapper could minister to her.

Nothing closes a knotty case so irrevocably as death. I was unprepared therefore for Max Bradley's sudden air of renewed force, of taking up paramount matters not yet completed. "This isn't the most suitable place for the business next in hand, gentlemen," he said. "We'll all step out of this room."

"I take no step!" asserted Skyras. "I demand to know, Sheriff? Who is this crook and why do you protect him?"

"Crook?" Eben Loman gave a kind of humorless guffaw. "Me protect *him?*"

"I'm a special agent, Department of Justice, Skyras," Max explained in business-like fashion. "As such, I'm detaining you for a few questions. We'll discuss your own grievance later—if you wish to. Meantime you'll hand that gun over into the sheriff's custody. Now, will you come along with us quietly, or would you rather be placed under Federal arrest?"

SKYRAS looked at him an instant, growled and grudgingly surrendered the gun, but he came along quietly, inimically, biding his time.

In the sitting-room Max proceeded to dispose of us variously about the room according to some plan obscure to all of us. It left us all facing the fireplace before which the girl had died, perched on chairs, tables. Flanking the empty fireplace on one hand was a massive bookcase, on the other a handsome, hand carved antique walnut lowboy. Max knelt and glanced briefly beneath the lowboy. There was a little space there; rudimentary legs raised the thing from the floor about one inch.

"I want all of you to be very still," he directed us. "Beneath this piece of furniture, oddly enough, an animal has taken refuge. I knew it was there; I want you to see it. If we're quiet, I imagine it will appear."

It sounded quite daffy to me, but Max was grave and cool as a skillful impresario. I looked at the lowboy, we all looked at the lowboy.

Max drifted from talk of native edibles to native habits. Gambling, for example. He described a kind of primitive steeplechase in which natives mark a circle in the hard earth with a pointed stick, assemble a number of individually marked Mexican jumping beans in the center, and bet which will make its way outside the circle first.

And I remembered, too, the white paper in Loveland's desk with the penciled circle—and the small brown things I had taken to be nuts.

Max's voice suddenly changed. "*Pinon* nuts and jumping beans are curiosities in this part of the country," he said in a tone, hard, full of dramatic significance. "Were you ever in the Southwest, Skyras?"

Skyras, his eyes narrowed to baleful slits, shook his head.

Max said, "I'll put it this way. How long have you been *away* from the Southwest—Juan Rosario Escanza?"

Skyras exploded; his face was dark as dead blood is dark, and his heavy neck swelled in his collar. "What does this mean? What are you getting at? I'm well known in this neighborhood for years. Are you trying to frame me for something?"

Max purred, "You forget that cultivated accent, Escanza. It was a good one while it lasted, but Juan Escanza was an educated man speaking fluent English. Listen to me carefully. The paper I made you sign this morning, remember? It went directly to Washington. It carried your fingerprints, along with the others. You had read it, handled it. They brought out the prints in Washington and searched the cards, and they found a complete history for one Juan Rosario Escanza, politician, gambler, white slaver, gunman and fugitive, wanted by the state of New Mexico on several counts, but chiefly for murder. The history was complete up to six years ago. And the prints matched one set of prints on that paper you signed. Your course is run, Escanza, and you are under arrest for disposal by the New Mexico authorities.

"It is not true," grated the big man between set teeth. "I shall fight extradition."

"Then I shall see that the authorities right here take action. Murder is no better liked in this state, Escanza."

"Murder?"

"Murder!" repeated Max, like a prosecutor impaling his victim on the stand. "You came here stealthily last night to see Gilbert Mackinson and tighten the screws, didn't you? You didn't want to run into Mrs. Mackinson, but you found yourself suddenly face to face with her regardless. So you thought! And when you threatened her—threatened Noreen Davies—and she didn't understand and screamed in fear and tried to defend herself, you threw yourself on her, didn't you? And killed her, trying to silence her!"

"I was not here, damn you!"

"I shall prove you were here. You left something behind you when you struggled with your victim. It damns you for the killer, Escanza, for you're the only man in this country who would carry such a trademark to leave behind." Max whirled about. "Look for yourself. Under the lowboy. What do you see that I saw—alive, coming out toward the light as all living things do, to crucify you!"

We looked. Max had timed it well. It was eerie. On the floor, just emerging from beneath the lowboy, was an absurd, sightless, feeble, tiny thing—a dun-colored Mexican jumping bean. It moved by little jerks, tumbling occasionally, pausing for an instant, making another convulsive movement as the worm-like larva within the shell pursued its own inscrutable destiny, obeying its one impulse—to travel toward the light.

And as it tumbled, we could see the small bright red marking applied to it to distinguish it from any number of others.

There came a shrill, frenzied curse in Spanish, and a whirlwind of deadly movement. Escanza, or Skyras, vaulted a table. One of the constables swung around the end to cut off his path to the French doors. The man reached back between his shoulder

(*Please turn to page* 60)

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THE CLUE OF THE JUMPING BEAN

(*Continued from page* 58)

blades, inside his coat. A knife flashed, and the officer wilted even as he clutched at the big man. Skyras broke from the falling constable; his arm flailed, and the knife whizzed across the room. Max ducked just in time, and the heavy blade struck the stone fireplace with a sharp ring of metal.

And a shot sounded, a shock to the eardrums—and the man whose real name was Escanza faltered as he reached the French doors, and fell to the floor on the threshold of escape, to groan and curse in pain and partial paralysis from a bullet in the hip.

Barclay, the matter-of-fact man from Washington, sighed and slid his warm automatic home again in its holster.

I satisfied my intense and jittery curiosity as soon as the confusion permitted. I said to Max, "What in God's name made you so certain Skyras—Escanza, if you'd rather—killed the girl? A jumping bean is no evidence; anyone might have dropped it there."

"I had exact information about that," said Max, smiling wryly. "I put it under the lowboy myself. You were talking to the sheriff at the moment."

I was shocked. "You *framed* him?"

Max laughed. "How could I frame him? You say yourself that a mere jumping bean is no evidence! I let him frame himself; there isn't really a shred of convicting evidence against the man. There were these things: that he was a crook, for the first. Our arrest demonstrated that. That he was a fraudulent Greek, for another. I'm not unacquainted with the rudiments of ethnology; I know breeds, and I can spot a touch of Indian when I see it. Any crook or any fraud anywhere encountered should be checked up on principle; that's why they have four and a half million sets of fingerprints on file in Washington. I got those prints and I sent them in. I palmed one of the jumping beans to make certain if it actually were a bean and if it jumped, all in order to back up my suspicion that Skyras was from the border country."

"But none of these things point to the murder."

"Certain things later did. I became aware that Mackinson hadn't done it. Did you notice his fingernails, long and strong and pointed? They'd have left marks, unfailingly. Most hands would. Skyras had no nails to speak of. He came often to the house. He was the only one to have reason for violence. He was making threats. He was desperate with greed. He was hounding this household. I reasoned that he did it, but couldn't in a million years prove it, and so I let him do it himself. He helped no end by turning up of his own accord. He was probably burning to know what was going on up here today—the Dusenberg gave him his chance to find out. But do you know what I most feared?"

I said dryly, "I'm afraid I fail to see any trace of timidity in all this!"

"Well, when I planted the jumping bean, and planned to invite Skyras here for a showdown, I was in dread that he might bring Loveland along. And that the jumping bean would incriminate the wrong man."

"What will happen to Skyras—or Escanza?"

"He'll die in New Mexico. It's better so. This is better closed here as quickly as possible."

I shuddered a little. It was not a pleasant business. "How about a drink?" I said.

Max beamed, slapped my shoulder. "Now that, my boy," he congratulated me, "is an original contribution to the case, and the brightest thought you've had all day!"

I was satisfied.

Doctors Say *Morning* Is the Best Time to End CONSTIPATION

PLUTO WATER GIVES SAFE RELIEF IN AN HOUR

Of course, morning is the best time to treat constipation. That's just common sense. Any woman knows that a laxative drug, if kept in her system all night, is liable to harm delicate tissues somehow, some way. That's why doctors say, "Wait until morning before taking a laxative. Then, if nature still refuses, you can always depend on safe, gentle Pluto Water for a natural flush within an hour".

50,000 Doctors Recommend It

50,000 doctors recommend Pluto Water, the saline mineral water that comes from French Lick Springs. And here are four important reasons why it is preferred above all other forms of laxatives: *First*, it is not a drug or a medicine and is therefore non-habit-forming. *Second*, Pluto is prompt—works in an hour. *Third*, Pluto is gentle, it simply flushes the intestines naturally. And *Fourth*, it is practically tasteless when properly used—1/5 Pluto, 4/5 water.

Next time you feel dull . . . when your digestive system is sluggish . . . take this safe way to more natural relief. Take Pluto Water *before* breakfast. In less than sixty minutes you'll be your old energetic self again—happy, active, clear-headed—for Pluto will cleanse your system gently and completely of all waste poisons. No risk of doping your system overnight, either. You can get a bottle at any drug store—two sizes—25c and 50c.

When Nature Won't Pluto Will

PLUTO WATER
America's Laxative Mineral Water

TIGER WOMAN

(*Continued from page* 21)

Inside, there was an impression of clutter and disorder; wardrobe trunks standing half open beside the long curtained windows, papers and magazines strewn about. A glimpse of a living-room to the right, and the open doorway of an adjoining bedroom to the left. But, as on a trickily lighted stage, the attention was flung arrow-like to the tumbled bed where, under an amber-shaded lamp, Lita Bernard lay, motionless, her lovely body sprawled half-way out of tumbled golden blankets, her arms outflung as if with thick purplish bruises.

Her flimsy, silk nightrobe was torn away from one exquisite shoulder and the beautiful auburn hair was a black framework for her deathly white face. From the closed bathroom door on the other side of the room came again the roaring beat of fists pounding on woodwork, and a woman's harsh, agonized voice:

"Help! Help! Let me out!"

Tubby was already there, shaking the knob.

"Who is it? Open up!"

The answering voice was clogged with a heavy foreign accent.

"I am Heloise, Madame's maid. I am lock' in. Let me out! *Vite! Vite!*"

Tubby squinted down at the lock. The keyhole was vacant.

"Just a minute," he said tersely, "we'll get a key." He picked up the phone from the small table beside the bed. "Night clerk? There's trouble in 280. Get the manager and house dick up here. And send a passkey. Make it snappy."

Jenny's hand stopped him as he was about to hang up.

"No one should leave the hotel without being checked up on," she whispered swiftly.

"Right." He quickly relayed the suggestion, then jiggled the hook for the operator. "Operator? Get me the *Evening Gazette* office, and step on it, sister."

DOCTOR LYONS was bending over the unconscious actress, his plump manicured fingers feeling for a pulse. Jenny watched him anxiously, her hands pressed tightly together. No one who had ever met Lita Bernard could have failed to come under the spell of her vivid, glamorous personality. Temperamental though she was, her generosity was a byword in the profession. Her charm came over the footlights like a wave of delicious perfume. And even her occasional outbursts of temper were only April storm interludes in the June warmth of her disposition. A murderous assault upon such a woman was more than news, it would be a publicly resented outrage.

Doctor Lyons straightened up, shaking his head.

"Not dead, but a nasty shock," he said in a low, important tone. Secretly he was delighted with this opportunity of impressing the golden-haired Jenny Jennings. He snapped open his bag, and took from it a box of small glass ampules of amyl nitrate.

Tubby finished speaking short, headline sentences to the City Desk, then looked across the bed at the slender figure in white chiffon.

"Why don't you run along, Jen? This may turn out to be pretty messy."

The girl lifted her head, and he saw that her brows were contracted sharply.

"Don't be mid-Victorian, Tubby."

She went quickly into the parlor at her right, snapped on the lights, and gave close scrutiny to the elaborately furnished room. She found that the hall door was locked on the inside. No one had gone out that way. She went as silently and purposefully into the bedroom opening off the one where Lita Bernard

(*Please turn to page* 62)

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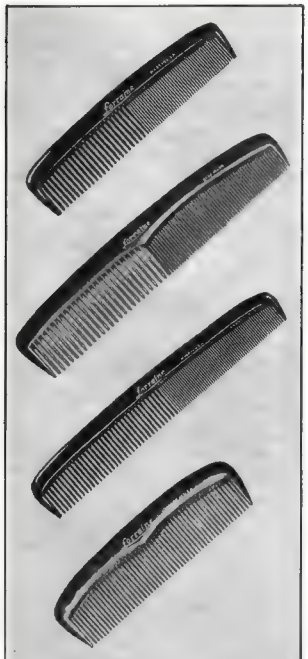

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First a light touch of Maybelline Eye Shadow blended softly on your eyelids to intensify the color and sparkle of your eyes, then form graceful, expressive eyebrows with the smooth - marking Maybelline Eyebrow Pencil. Now a few, simple brush strokes of harmless Maybelline Mascara to your lashes to make them appear long, dark, and luxuriant, and presto—your eyes are beautiful and most alluring!

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Care for your lashes by keeping them soft and silky with the pure Maybelline Eyelash Tonic Cream—to be applied nightly before retiring, and be sure to brush and train your brows with the dainty, specially designed Maybelline Eyebrow Brush. All Maybelline Eye Beauty Aids may be had in purse sizes at all leading 10c stores. Insist on genuine Maybelline Eye Beauty Aids to be assured of highest quality and absolute harmlessness.

TIGER WOMAN

(*Continued from page* 60)

lay. It obviously belonged to Heloise, the maid. The hall door there was locked in the same manner.

She stepped out into the short corridor that lay at right angles to the main hallway, and stood looking intently down the long buff colored passage. Then she returned to the bedroom, where Doctor Lyons was holding a broken ampule of restorative under the actress's nostrils. Lita Bernard did not stir, nor respond in any way. The house physician blinked with surprise.

The cruel bruises on the throat were deepening into ugly circles. Particularly large and blunt fingers must have done the merciless throttling.

In the bathroom, Heloise was sobbing jerkily:

"Let me out! Let me go to Madame!"

"Keep your shirt on, sister," advised Tubby through the door, "the doctor is here, and Madame is okay."

THE manager of the Baumont, normally suave and genial, arrived a bit disheveled, and more than a bit disturbed. Ballen, the house detective, grim and black-eyed, was with him.

"You'll go easy on this, won't you?" the manager begged agitatedly, recognizing Tubman Jones. The house dick went past the reporter with a curt nod, snapped the passkey efficiently in the lock, and opened the bathroom door.

A tall, gaunt, sallow faced woman stumbled forward, straggling black hair pasted sweatily down on her thin triangular face. She was dressed in a black uniform, with white bands at collar and cuffs.

"Oh, Madame . . . Madame . . . "

She stood swaying for an instant, as if fighting for breath. Then her knees seemed to buckle under her, and she sank down beside the bed, groping for Lita Bernard's limp hand.

"Ah, that beast . . . that brute . . ." she moaned, "did he keel her?"

Ballen leaned over her, pushing his black derby farther back from his close-cropped hair.

"Who was it? Did yuh see him, huh?"

She nodded her head, as if in a daze.

"He poosh me into bat'room . . . I fall. And when I get up . . . Madame is screaming, and the door ees lock'!"

"Did yuh know him? Huh?"

She stared at his grim eyes, the muscles of her throat twitching spasmodically.

"Eef I tell you," she managed hoarsely, "'e weel say I lie. Oh, 'e is clevaire . . . 'e is a Judas! I weel not speak 'is name . . . that ees for Madame to do!"

She suddenly twisted about, and took the pale, ravaged face of the actress between her long white hands.

"Madame," she whispered brokenly, "speak, I eemplore you! Do not let such a guilty one go unpunish' . . . Madame, speak to Heloise . . . "

Jenny felt a queer cold thrill run down her spine. She heard Doctor Lyons' sharp intake of breath, saw the startled faces of the manager and the house detective, caught the slight scratching of Tubby's pencil moving swiftly over a folded piece of paper. For the unconscious woman was moving, slowly, languidly. Her long, beautiful fingers uncurled, and the eyelids lifted, revealing starry, violet gray orbs, fascinatingly lovely, even now. The pupils were so distended as to make them appear glazed, centerless. The rest of her face was whitely immobile. Only in the wide-open eyes did there seem to be life and thought.

The doctor made a movement forward. But the Frenchwoman's thin hands went toward him peremptorily in a quick, stabbing gesture. She was leaning over the actress, so that her triangular face in the amber light was like a suspended mask.

"Madame . . . eet ees I, Heloise! Tell them . . . tell them who did thees theeng to you . . . Madame, I eemplore you . . . "

For an instant there was no sound in the room except the breathing of the intent group. The actress's eyes went slowly from face to face without recognition, and one hand came up to touch tremblingly the blotted flesh of her throat.

"I . . . I . . . someone . . . " she whispered, and half raised herself from the pillow.

"*Oui*, Madame . . . *who?*"

Lita Bernard's glazed eyes came back slowly to the Frenchwoman's haggard face, so close to hers.

"It was . . . Raoul," she said faintly, and fell back in a swoon.

Doctor Lyons nervously broke open another ampule. The sharpness of its odor filled the room. But under the actress's nostrils it was impotent and without efficacy.

The group stirred. The manager looked at the house detective with harassed eyes.

"His room is on this floor, next to Doctor Lyons. You'll have to take him in custody, of course, but for God's sake . . . " his voice shook, "do it as quietly as possible. This is terrible, terrible."

The Frenchwoman had dropped to her knees again, and was chafing the actress's unresponsive hands.

"They quarrel today . . . " she said brokenly, "she say 'e must leave her company. 'E say . . . 'Not while I live . . . or you!' Then 'e rush out, and Madame faint. I go to the Doctaire for 'elp . . . "

Doctor Lyons nodded, one eye on Tubby's swiftly moving pencil. He was pleasantly visualizing his name in the resulting headlines.

"Yes, yes, that is true," he agreed breathily.

Ballen grunted, and went heavy-footed down the hallway.

Jenny was still staring down at the beautiful, immobile face on the pillow. Her lips were tightly compressed.

"I'll have a policeman on guard outside the suite," the manager went on, "and of course you'll get a nurse . . . "

The black garbed French woman swayed to her feet. "That ees not necessaire, Messieurs. I 'ave taken care of Madame for many years . . . the good Doctaire can tell me what to do . . . "

Dr. Lyons shook his head. His eyeglasses glistened.

"No, no, we must have a trained nurse for your mistress. You're in no condition to help her, my good woman . . . " (Tubby looked across at Jenny with a half grin.) "You go into your room and lie down. I'll call you if you are needed."

SHE started to protest volubly, her voice increasing in shrillness. The manager silenced her peremptorily, thinking of ears listening at open doors along the corridor.

"You'll do as you're told. Now we must leave Doctor Lyons with his patient . . . "

"I think I heard a vest button pop on that last speech," Tubby said under his breath as he and Jenny went quickly back along the carpeted hallway to the doctor's office where they had left their wraps.

She looked up at him with a curious, far-away expression in her eyes. And in the luxurious paneled room she suddenly stopped, staring sightlessly at the gold-threaded lamé jacket he was holding up for her.

"Tubby," she said slowly, "if Lita Bernard should die tonight what would happen to Raoul Demarest?"

He shrugged.

"He'd get the chair, unless some slick lawyer could induce the jury to call it manslaughter. But what makes you think she might die? She doesn't seem to be in any particular danger . . . "

Jenny opened her lips to reply. But at that instant there was a small

(*Please turn to page* 64)

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TIGER WOMAN

(*Continued from page 62*)

commotion in the hall outside. Voices were raised, then sharply lowered. And, through the open door, Ballen and another detective propelled a blond, angry young man in modish overcoat and hat, one who had evidently been so taken by surprise that his mental processes had had no time to form into physical resistance.

"In here," the house dick was saying out of the corner of his mouth, "and don't shout unless you want me to paste you one."

He had slammed the door shut before he saw the two young people who had been screened behind it.

"Don't mind us," Jenny spoke up sweetly, "we just came back to get our things." She was making feminine dabs at her nose with a tiny puff from a powder compact. But her eyes were intent on the furious, bewildered face of the young man. "I see you found Mr. Demarest. Was he going or coming?"

"Caught him sneaking in," Ballen replied triumphantly.

The actor flung a rabid oath at him.

"I was not 'sneaking' in! I walked up the one flight of stairs from the lobby, and you crazy fools pounced on me. Do you know who I am? Raoul Demarest, a guest in this hotel. I . . . "

The two detectives exchanged bored glances.

"Oh, sure, sure. You don't know a thing, you gotta perfect alibi, you was just walking through the park . . . at two A. M."

The blond actor stared at them, moistening dry lips. "Alibi for what? As for walking . . . yes, I was. Is there any law against that?"

Ballen interrupted curtly.

"I'll do the talking around here. You and Miss Bernard had a row this afternoon, didn't yuh? Huh?"

"I won't tell you. It's none of your damned business."

"Take it easy, buddy, it's plenty of our business. You threatened her, didn't you? Huh?"

RAOUL DEMAREST started to reply. Then he stopped, his eyes narrowing to hard blue slits. He breathed deeply, his fingers gripping the table edge so that the knuckles showed in sharp white ridges.

"I see," he said slowly. "You mean Miss Bernard wants to have me arrested for that." He was obviously fighting for self-control. His voice had lost its furious belligerence. When he spoke again, it was with the rich, persuasive tones of the successful actor once more.

"Gentlemen, I suggest that you wait until morning to make the arrest. You surely know how temperamental Miss Bernard is . . . this is an impulse, one which she will regret. Believe me, I am thinking of her, rather than of myself. The attendant publicity would not be to her advantage . . . "

Ballen snorted. The other detective looked slightly amused.

"Not good enough, buddy. The publicity is already in the papers, if I know reporters." He glanced at Tubby. "Yuh can't choke a lady half t' death and get away with it, not in this hotel . . . "

Raoul Demarest started, as if a blow had been aimed at his face. "Choke her? *I* choke Lita? My God, man, you're crazy! I worship the very ground she walks on. I was angry, yes. But choke her . . . " He suddenly reeled, and put one hand on his forehead. A gesture which might have been one of genuine emotion, or of melodrama. "Are you telling me that someone . . . that Lita . . . has been hurt?" He started for the doorway. "Let me go to her! Let me go to her, I say!"

The detectives flung themselves upon him. There was a rough and tumble scrimmage, strangely silent for all its violence. Jenny pressed her hands over her eyes as there came a sickening crack on the unprotected blond head.

The actor slumped down between the two men, and they looked at each other, breathing heavily.

"These actor birds can't take it," Ballen grunted. "Now we've gotta have a stretcher up here, and the manager'll give me hell."

"Why not put him in his own room," suggested Tubby, "under guard?"

Ballen nodded.

"Sure; why not. The place is going to be lousy with cops . . . "

Between them, they got the unconscious actor out into the hall and into his own room, which the house detective unlocked with a passkey.

Tubby retrieved his hat and coat from the davenport, and looked at Jenny, who was standing in the same position by the table, her hands pressed tightly over her eyes.

"Finish your drink, pal," he said gently, "and I'll put you in a cab. I told you these things weren't in your line. I gotta get down to the office with this story."

She put her hands down, and he saw that there were hectic patches of red in her cheeks. Her eyes were startlingly blue. "Tubby," she said abruptly, "you like me a lot, don't you?"

His mouth fell open. A painful flush rose to the roots of his hair.

"You know I do," he answered shortly. "What is this, a game of truth?"

"Because," she went on, ignoring the question, "I'm going to ask you to give up the scoop on this story to help me find out the truth that lies behind it . . . something that's a lot bigger and more important."

He stared at her, completely nonplussed.

"You mean why he choked her? That'll all come out later, Jen . . . "

She shook her head vehemently.

"I think I know what they quarreled about, and, if I'm right, it must never get into print. I like Lita Bernard, Tubby; I know some of the grand things she has done for people who needed help. I like Raoul Demarest, too. In spite of his dime novel name, he's a real person. Don't make me explain now . . . just do what I ask you. Get Doctor Lyons out of her room so that I can slip in there before the nurse comes. Fifteen should be enough . . . and I honestly think it's a matter of life or death. Will you, Tubby . . . for me?"

FOR one long instant, his mouth remained unromantically ajar as he stared down into her tense, uplifted face. Then his teeth came together in a click of decision.

"Okay, pal; you being your father's daughter, there's something more than vacuum under the hair. Do I get the doc out silently, or with sound effects?"

"With just enough noise to be heard distinctly," she replied, dimpling.

Then suddenly she lifted herself on tiptoe, and kissed the surprised young man squarely on the mouth.

"You're a darling!"

The bulky young reporter went down the carpeted corridor toward 280 as if his overly large shoes were heeled with Mercury's wings.

Five minutes later, the dapper, pink-faced physician and the stocky young man came hurrying back toward the office. Tubby had invented a mythical patient, one with a combination of symptoms probably unknown to materia medica.

Doctor Lyons, his mind in a whirl from so many unexpected happenings in one night, did not hear the door of his office open as he went by, nor did he see the slim figure in white that slipped out into the corridor as he turned into his own room.

The big policeman lounging comfortably in a deep upholstered chair outside 280 saluted the fair-haired girl affably. He had no way of knowing that the white apron was of the

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kind doctors wear, or that the seeming cap was a hastily folded towel. He did not even question the propriety of silver evening slippers. His hazy reaction was, "Swell looking nurse. Wisht *I* was sick!"

Jenny smiled at him professionally as she opened the door of Lita Bernard's bedroom. Once inside, she turned the key in the lock very softly, and stood with her back against the panels for a moment, forcing herself to breathe deeply and calmly. The bedroom door at the left remained closed. She wondered what the Frenchwoman, Heloise, was doing or thinking.

THE room was as she had last seen it, except that the yellow blankets had been drawn up carefully around the slender figure in the bed, and the amber colored bed lamp had been turned aside, so that it no longer shone like a spotlight upon the pale, rigid face of the still unconscious actress. The bruised throat had been bandaged.

For a short moment Jenny bent above her, listening to the faint but steady breathing. Then with silent swiftness she tiptoed into the lighted bathroom, her eyes going with concentrated attention over the appurtenances of the white-tiled cubicle; the heavy towels piled on the high rack over the tub, smaller ones neatly hung near the laving bowl, jars of cold cream and bath powder on the glass shelf.

She opened the medicine cabinet, made a perfunctory examination of unguents and small bottles, and shook her head. Then her eye fell on the laundry bag hanging behind the bathroom door. Carefully she ran her hand down inside amid the soft dampness of used towels. Her groping fingers found something . . . drew out two objects. A wave of excited crimson flooded her face as she stared down at them. Quickly she flung a small hand towel around them and thrust them into the pocket of her white uniform. As she did so there came a soft, barely perceptible sound from the bedroom.

Flattened into the angle made by the half-open door and the tiled wall, she stood rigidly, almost without breathing. Her straining ear caught the faintest *susurrus* of a rustling skirt.

Cautiously, with infinite care, she leaned forward so that she could look through the crack. For the first instant, nothing moved within the limited space of the long rectangle. She could see the bed, the white unconscious face of Lita Bernard, the glint of auburn hair, the bandaged throat, and the uncovered roundness of one shoulder.

Then a dark shadow moved cautiously across the dim, amber-tinted gloom. A tall, gaunt woman garbed in black—her face like a sharp white triangle in the pasted blackness of her hair . . . Heloise.

With a stealth that had something tigerish in it, she slid along the far side of the bed. The triangular face was thrust forward into the gleam of light, and from the parted lips came a sharp, sibilant whisper.

"Madame! Madame! It is I! Heloise! Speak to me! I command you!"

Jenny saw Lita Bernard's pale eyelids quiver; saw a spasmodic movement of one of her limp hands. Her voice came slowly, reluctantly, in a dim, far-away murmur . . .

"Yes . . . yes . . . Heloise, I hear you . . . "

Now a hand came creeping into the long slit of light. Something small and white was in it, moving toward the actress's lips.

"Take this, Madame, it is what you 'ave longed for . . . it is what you 'ave craved. Take it, and then Madame will sleep . . . sleep! No more awakening . . . only peace!"

Jenny whirled out from behind the bathroom door and stood in the slanting rectangle of light.

"You . . . murderess!" she said low and distinctly.

The Frenchwoman jerked back with a choked scream, staring at the apparition in white on the other side of the wide bed.

"Non! Non!" she gasped out. "You meestake . . . "

"I said . . . murderess! You were going to give her a fatal dose of drugs, weren't you? You've been at it for years, only being very careful not to overdo it. You found her an easy subject to hypnotize, didn't you, after you had once broken down her morale?"

The woman was glaring at the girl across the bed with the baleful eyes of a venomous serpent.

"You . . . you are no nurse," she muttered quickly.

"I am not. But I'm Doctor Paul Jennings' daughter, if that conveys anything to you, and I know mental suggestion when I see it. The doctor got no response from her, and you did. She said exactly what you had impressed on her subconscious mind she must say . . . *which was to accuse Raoul Demarest of choking her!* Then she fainted again."

The Frenchwoman's mouth twisted into a defiant snarl.

"Who weel believe you? I was lock' in the bat'room . . ."

"You did the locking from the inside," the girl said sharply. "It might have worked, Heloise, only we happened to get here too quickly. No one passed us in the hall . . . no one could have left the corridor afterwards, because it was watched. *The guilty person had to be right here* . . . and you were!"

"They quarreled today . . . I can prove it . . ." Her voice had sunk to a strangled whisper.

"Of course they quarreled. And it was about the same things; drugs . . . and you. I overheard them once in her dressing-room when I went to interview her. He was pleading with her to get rid of you, because you were making an addict out of her. But even he didn't know of that other more terrible power you had over her. She was defending you; saying that you only gave her drugs when she needed them, that you had no relatives, no friends, that you had been so faithful . . . *faithful!*" The girl's voice was tense with loathing. "You've been like a coiled viper, waiting your chance to strike. You were afraid of Raoul's love for her, and his influence, afraid she would dismiss you. You'd have lost a meal ticket . . . and what more, Heloise? *What had you gotten Miss Bernard to leave you in her will?*"

It was a chance thrust. But the woman recoiled from it with a gasp. Her black eyes were wild, ferocious.

"Lies! All lies! I 'ave done not'ing . . . "

"Except try to kill Lita Bernard, and put the guilt upon the man you hated. You had to get back in here, didn't you? No hypnotic sleep lasts forever, and, when she recovered normal consciousness, she would deny having said that Raoul choked her. The truth would have finally come out . . . you couldn't risk that, could you? The white pellet there in your hand is the answer. Put it on the table for the doctors to examine . . . if you dare!"

The woman was shaking. Her sallow, triangular face was a distorted mask of hatred.

"The leetle pellet . . . already ees destroy'. Ground into the carpet. You can prove not'ing . . . "

The girl leaned forward over the bed, where Lita Bernard lay like a beautiful, soulless statue.

"Oh, yes I can, Heloise. I can prove that *you* did the throttling . . . undoubtedly after you had put her into a hypnotic sleep. *I found the big leather*

(*Please turn to page* 66)

Not all Sun-Tan is Becoming

Optical Machine finds Answer to

DULL TAN..HOT RUDDY TAN..FADING TAN

(above) **MISS SALLY HANFORD** uses Pond's Brunette in winter. In summer, Rose Brunette. (right) **MRS. ALLEN WHITNEY** uses Natural in winter. When sunburned, the new Pond's Sun Tan.

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Beauty Aids

TIGER WOMAN

(*Continued from page 65*)

gloves in the laundry bag, Heloise, where you had stuffed them after you had locked yourself in. There are leaden disks in the finger tips . . . the kind dressmakers use. And on those metal disks will be your . . . fingerprints!"

For an instant the woman rocked back and forth, as if agitated by a violent wind. Then she flung out her hands blindly.

"Let me go, Mademoiselle! Let me go, and I weel nevaire come near Madame again, I swear it. Be merciful . . . "

The girl straightened up. She felt herself trembling, and fought for self-control. "It's only a matter of minutes until someone comes; the nurse or the doctor. Bring Lita Bernard back to consciousness with truthful memory restored . . . and I'll give you a chance to make your getaway. You are the one who dominates her subconscious mind . . . and you must give her the right suggestion. And you must tell her that drugs are not necessary. She is to forget the desire for them . . . "

THE big policeman heard nothing going on in the bedroom. He turned his head—at first lazily, then alertly. The murmur of voices which had seemed natural, as between nurse and patient, had ceased. Instead, there was a muffled jumble of sounds, as if things were being thrown about . . . or like people bumping into furniture. He wondered if the actress was getting violent.

He stood up, just as Doctor Lyons and Tubby came around the corner from the main corridor. The house physician looked extremely angry.

"I don't believe a patient was in my office at all," he was saying. Then he saw the policeman's worried face.

"I guess the girl friend kinda needs you in there," the officer said. "Sounds as if she's having trouble."

The doctor snapped, "What girl friend?"

"The nurse. Jeez!"

The sound of a choked scream filtered through the panels. The three men sprang to the door, shook it, then tried the other two. All were locked.

"Jenny!" called Tubby hoarsely.

"Jenny?" echoed Doctor Lyons incredulously.

There was no answer.

Tubby's face was white. He looked at the big cop.

"Let's go, buddy."

Two hugely solid shoulders crashed against the door. It shook with the assault, then with the second healthy lunge there came the straining shriek of yielding wood. One of the upper panels cracked. Tubby smashed it inward with his foot, got his hand through, and turned the key.

In the shadow by the big dresser was a slender figure, crumpled and white.

"Jenny! For God's sake—"

A towel had been stuffed cruelly into her mouth. Her hair was in dishevelment around her scratched, bleeding face. Her eyes, as Tubby yanked the gag lose, were dazed and expressionless. He realized that she had been knocked almost unconscious by falling backward against the sharp corner of the bureau.

"Let's have the smelling salts, Doc," he said with difficulty. "And keep those people out . . . "

Guests and bell boys were milling about the opened door. The policeman pushed them back, peremptorily.

The actress was stirring. Doctor Lyons, completely addled by so much unexpected responsibility, went like a distraught mother hen back and forth between the bed and the limp white form in Tubby's arms.

The sharpness of the smelling salts brought a faint flush back to Jenny's pallid cheeks. She stared up into the big, worried face above hers for a moment, then managed a wan smile.

"Miss Bernard . . . " she whispered, "is she all right?"

"I guess so; she's coming out of her faint. What happened, Hon? Did she . . . "

"Heloise," she said faintly. "I gave her a break . . . and she gave me the works. Serves me right. She caught me off guard . . . "

Tubby growled out something that boded the Frenchwoman no good, and made a vicious gesture with his thumb toward the door of the adjoining bedroom.

The big policeman nodded. But the room was empty. In the turmoil of people in the hall, she had slipped out unnoticed.

"We'll get her," Tubby said through his teeth. "Boy, we'll find her . . . "

Jenny's voice had sudden strength in it.

"No, Tubby! She must never be found. I won't enter a complaint against her, and I'm sure Miss Bernard won't . . . "

Lita Bernard was sitting up in the bed, her eyes wide open and bewildered, staring into the doctor's face.

"Raoul . . . she faltered weakly . . . "what has happened? Where is Raoul? Please send for him."

Jenny got dizzily to her feet, thankful for Tubby's big arm around her.

"Miss Bernard," she said gently, "try not to be frightened . . . everything is all right now. The trouble is over . . . Heloise has gone . . . for good. You don't need to tell anyone about her except that she was a treacherous servant . . . do you understand me?"

The actress stared at the girl, her violet gray eyes brimming with tears. Then she gave a long, deep sigh that was like the release of something imprisoned.

"Yes, yes, I understand. Thank you . . . and thank God!"

"NICE work, pal," Tubby said an hour later, as a taxi was bearing them not too swiftly in the direction of Jenny's home. "It sounds easy as you tell it, but I still can't see how you figured it all out."

Jenny's bandaged head was cushioned comfortably on the broad expanse of his shoulder.

"I didn't. Part of it I guessed at. The will, for instance. But it turned out that I was right. You heard her tell the detective . . . how before she met Raoul she had made Heloise her sole beneficiary. An estate in France, jewels, bonds, quite a bit of money . . . the woman was in danger of losing them all."

There was a short silence, during which Tubby was acutely conscious of the fair head resting so confidingly just under his chin. It took real willpower to keep his arm from tightening around the slender figure.

"Do you think," he asked to keep his mind in safer channels, "that Bernard can be cured, permanently?"

Jenny nodded, then winced.

"I do. She isn't a hopeless case . . . Heloise didn't dare endanger the professional work that meant bread and butter for them both." She paused. Then went on softly, "Besides, she'll have unselfish love to help her now; that's a big thing in itself—isn't it?"

Almost Tubby spoke. Then painfully swallowed the words that clamored to be said. A girl like Jenny . . . how could he ever hope to be anything more than a big brother to her? Instead, he patted her shoulder.

"You're a good kid, Jenny."

She drew away from his circling arm as the taxi stopped.

"Thanks, Grandpop," she said drily. Then, irrelevantly, she sighed.

"You're nice, too, Tubby . . . but just a trifle dumb."

Another story in this new series of the two detectives in love—will appear in next month's issue of MYSTERY. *Tubman Jones and Jenny Jennings will again become involved in a romantic adventure of thrills and danger, which we hope will entertain and please you.*

CUPID

ONE cleaner for every white shoe in your home! From the children's sneakers to your own delicate white kid shoes. Cupid cleans and whitens at the same time. Easy to apply, it gives all kinds of white shoes a smooth, lasting whiteness that *does not rub off!* You can't go wrong with Cupid. Try it today . . . either a bottle of the liquid form; or a tube of the paste that's so convenient when you're traveling.

10c *in liquid or paste form*

AND FOR YOUR OTHER SHOES—

Whittemore's, who make Cupid, have been making shoe polishes for almost a century. They also manufacture superior Oil Pastes for leather shoes in all colors—black, tan, brown, ox-blood and neutral—in convenient cans with the easy-opener. For only ten cents. Whittemore's Oil Pastes polish, preserve and soften your shoes. Will not crack the leather. They give your shoes a mirror-like shine—whether they're wet or dry. Add it to your shopping list this week.

10c

I GO SLEUTHING

A new kind of department for new writers. Do you know any true, unsolved "unwritten mysteries"? This magazine will pay $100 apiece for the best solution submitted each month! Below is this month's winner! See page 83 for contest rules.

THE recent action of Governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray of Oklahoma in granting a six-day leave of absence from the state penitentiary to a convicted murderer, that the latter might go quail hunting, was signalized by a flourish of headlines and a chorus of "Oh My Goodnesses."

"Outrageous," gasped those disposed to hold holy the proverbial letter of the law. "An act of insanity," exclaimed others, ever willing to quarrel with the state executive because of his eccentricities. "Amazing and unprecedented," howled still other custom-abiding individuals.

Unprecedented? Well, not exactly. Murray's literal thumbing of the nose at convention serves to call attention to a more extraordinary, though less publicized, extra-legal application of justice that stands today as a mountain classic of West Virginia entitled—if it needs must have a title—*The Man Whose Honesty Saved Him from the Gallows.*

"I GO SLEUTHING" WINNER FOR JULY

•

JOHN L. BOWEN

Newark, N. J.

Any overalled, high-booted mountaineer of Nicholas County, West Virginia, can recite forward and backward the saga of Clyde Beale, the man the law would kill but the people wouldn't.

"Too honest a man this Clyde was," they chuckle. "He never kilt the woman no way. Efen he did, 'pears he'd a skeedaddled when he had the chanct."

If ever a convicted murderer had the "chanct" to "skeedaddle," it was Beale. But he didn't and that is the reason why, instead of rotting in a pauper's grave donated by the state for the poor devils who dangle at the end of West Virginia's legal noose, his joyous singing rings today through the purple, timbered hills of his native Nicholas County.

It was the evening of May 9, 1925, that Mrs. Rissie Perdue and her husband, Jesse Perdue, were walking along the railroad tracks near Vulcan, Mingo County, West Virginia. The heel came off one of the woman's slippers and the two entered the general store conducted by Levi Layne a few yards further down the tracks to purchase a new pair of slippers. In the store was Beale, who had come down from his home at Coe, Nicholas County, to visit his half-brother, Layne.

While Perdue and his wife bargained for the slippers, someone produced a bottle of liquor and soon afterwards, Layne, his wife, Minnie, Beale and the Perdue couple repaired to the Layne home. The player piano and the phonograph were started and more liquor consumed. Some time during the boisterous evening Mrs. Perdue disappeared from the party, presumably alone.

Three days later her body was found in the Tug River which ran along close by the Layne home.

Because of post-morten findings indicating that the woman had been criminally assaulted and struck over the head with some blunt instrument, Beale and Layne were arrested and charged with the murder.

Both were indicted by the Mingo County grand jury and their cases called up for trial at the July, 1926, term. Layne obtained a change of venue, was tried in Wyoming County and the jury failed to agree. Later his case was annulled in Wyoming County. He was reindicted in Mingo County, and again he obtained a change of venue to Logan County where a jury brought in a verdict of acquittal.

Meanwhile Beale was brought to trial in Mingo County, convicted and sentenced to hang on September 7, 1926. A stay of sentence was granted to permit an appeal to the state supreme court and he was taken to the Wyoming County jail for safe keeping.

At the time, Beale was the only inmate of the crude wooden structure facetiously referred to as a jail. It would be stretching the point to call him a prisoner, for he was in truth a privileged "guest" of the county. The jailer, a jolly fellow bred in the mountains and with a strong sense of justice of his own, refused to consider the situation seriously. In his own mind he determined that the pleasant young man with the ruddy face and smiling blue eyes was innocent of the Perdue woman's murder. He believed Beale's story that he had been framed because of some domestic trouble "among my relatives."

A strong bond of friendship developed between the condemned man and his keeper. Beale began to take his meals regularly at the latter's home and in return for his kindness invariably spent Mondays at the jailer's home helping his wife with the washing.

"Gee," he remarked one sultry August afternoon as he and the jailer whittled on the door step, "this'd be a swell day for fishin'."

"Danged if it wouldn't," answered the officer. "Say, I got some poles out in the wood shed. Take one, dig yourself some worms and go see how they're bitin'. There's a good spot about five miles down the creek."

Beale rose with alacrity, brushed the whittlings from his rumpled khaki trousers and hustled toward the woodshed.

"Hey," yelled the jailer, "I might not be here when you get back. You'd better take the keys with you, so's you can get back into the jail when you're through fishin'."

And Beale took the keys and when

(*Please turn to page* 83)

BETTY SHOULDN'T HAVE CALLED YOU, MRS. LANE. I'M NOT REALLY ILL—THE HEAT AND STEAM FROM BOILING THE CLOTHES EXHAUSTED ME
GRACIOUS—HOW FOOLISH TO SCRUB AND BOIL LIKE THAT ON THIS SCORCHING DAY

WHY DON'T YOU USE RINSO? IT SOAKS CLOTHES 4 OR 5 SHADES WHITER THAN THEY CAN BE SCRUBBED AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO BOIL
WHY, THAT'S MARVELOUS. I MUST TRY IT

NEXT WASHDAY
GEE MOM, YOU'RE THROUGH WITH THE WASH EARLY TODAY—AND YOU LOOK SO COOL
THAT'S BECAUSE I DIDN'T SCRUB OR BOIL THE CLOTHES—THANKS TO RINSO
LATER
RINSO IS A LIFE-SAVER! I HAD THE EASIEST WASH-DAY OF MY LIFE TODAY—YET MY WASH IS WHITER THAN EVER
NOW TRY RINSO'S CREAMY SUDS FOR DISHWASHING. IT GETS RID OF GREASE IN A JIFFY. AND IT'S SO EASY ON THE HANDS

WANT to see the snowiest wash ever? *Try Rinso!*—in washing machine or tub. See how this famous soap *soaks* out dirt—gets clothes 4 or 5 shades whiter without scrubbing or boiling. See how a little Rinso whips at once into creamy, lasting suds—*even in hardest water.* See how bright colors come! Clothes last longer washed this gentle way—they're not scrubbed threadbare.

"Use Rinso," say washer experts

The makers of 34 famous washers recommend Rinso for safety and for whiter, brighter clothes. Marvelous for dishes and all cleaning. Grease goes in a jiffy, dishes and glassware *shine.* Easy on hands. Keeps them smooth, white. Get the BIG package. It's economical.

A PRODUCT OF LEVER BROTHERS CO.

Tested and Approved by Good Housekeeping Institute

THE BIGGEST-SELLING PACKAGE SOAP IN AMERICA

An Old Favorite in a New Dress

● Look for the new ColoRinse package the next time you are near a beauty counter. For this new-old aid to well groomed hair now has a package as distinctive as the results it produces. There's nothing like a ColoRinse to put new sparkle, softness and that glowing, colorful "Sheen of Youth" into hair that is fading or showing age. ColoRinse is harmless—it doesn't dye or bleach—and there are ten lovely, natural shades to choose from!

THE NESTLE-LE MUR COMPANY • NEW YORK
MAKERS OF QUALITY PRODUCTS
10c at all 10c Stores and Beauty Shops . . . Nestle ColoRinse, SuperSet, Golden Shampoo and Henna Shampoo

SAVAGE
LIPSTICK

A transparent, entirely pasteless lipstick that savagely clings to lovely lips . . .

●

Excitingly, savagely, compellingly lovely . . . this freshly different lipstick whose alluring shades and seductive smoothness bring to lips the sublime madness of a moon-kissed jungle night! Yes, Savage does exactly that . . . for it colors the lips without coating them. A moment after application, the color separates from the cosmetic and melts right into the skin. Wipe the cosmetic away and there are your lips pastelessly colored to a stunning hue that stays thrillingly bright for many hours. And on the bright, silvery case, tiny savages whirl in a maddening dance . . . provocative as the lipstick itself!

Four Really Appealing Shades

TANGERINE . . . has a light orange flare that does wonders in combination with blonde hair and a fair skin.

FLAME . . . is a truly exciting, brilliant red that's decidedly bizarre in its smartness.

NATURAL . . . a true, blood color that augments the charm of brunette beauty.

BLUSH . . . the kind of transparent lipstick that changes color on the lips to brighten the lips' own natural color.

20c
at all 10 cent stores

GUILTY BY CIRCUMSTANCE!

(*Continued from page 4*)

is well settled that if all the circumstances proved, taken together, are equally compatible with innocence and guilt, the defendant is entitled to acquittal, and I, therefore, must direct a verdict of acquittal in this case."

IS circumstantial evidence a sort of lost cause, a desperate hope? Amazingly enough, the very cunning of a crime ofttimes reaches out to punish its perpetrator. Guilt by circumstances has a habit of pointing irresistibly in one direction with the stubbornness of a compass.

In the strange case of Eleanor Potter, a nineteen-year-old boarding school student, doctors thought natural causes might have brought about her death. Presently, however, there came to light a set of facts that gave the authorities a wholly different view.

A year and a half before she died she had met at a seaside resort a young medical student named David Hart. The affair was no mere summer flirtation. Quite the contrary! The following Winter the two were secretly married under assumed names.

Six months went by, they were again at the seashore, but last summer's ardent wooer—now a secret husband—was ardent no longer. Eleanor was insisting that the marriage be revealed to her chum, May Somers. Reluctantly David told May their secret. Instantly May declared her intention of urging Eleanor to tell her mother.

His eyes blazed angrily.

"She'll ruin my prospects and her own if she tells it now," he rasped. "I wish she were dead, and I were out of the whole affair."

Meanwhile Eleanor had been experiencing the biological consequences of her marriage. Alarmed, she made a three months visit to the home of an uncle, a doctor, in a distant city. Thanks to her uncle's surgical skill, her cause for alarm was nonexistent at the end of her stay. In the meantime, though, her mother had learned of the marriage.

Mrs. Potter talked things over with David. She agreed that the marriage might be kept secret a while longer. Eleanor was put in boarding school. Still David was not satisfied. Eleanor could take a college course, he urged her mother, and nothing need be said about the marriage for at least two years.

But the good lady was in no mood for further temporizing with her daughter's future. She delivered her ultimatum.

"The eighth of February will be the first anniversary of the marriage. You and Eleanor can get married by a minister on that day and let me hold the certificate. I'll make it public when I see fit. Either that, or I'll disclose the whole affair to your people at once."

David consented. It would ruin him, he said, to have his people know just now.

The very next day he had a druggist fill a prescription for quinine and morphine capsules. The following day he visited Eleanor at her school, gave her some of the capsules and suggested she take them for headaches. He went away then for a week's visit in a distant state.

When he got back to town, Eleanor was dying. David was sent for. The doctor attending her asked him what the capsules contained. David told him. It was possible, the doctor thought, that the druggist might have reversed the proportions of the two drugs. Instantly David rushed out to check up with the druggist, and presently returned to say that the druggist had filled the prescription correctly. By morning Eleanor was dead.

Others might speak of heart disease or uraemic poisoning or a tumor on the brain as possible causes of her death, but not so Dr. Fuller, who attended her. He realized, as he afterwards testified at David's trial, that the girl was in the throes of the most profound case of morphine poisoning he had ever witnessed in thirty-five years of practice.

David's capsules were innocent—or so he protested. More than that he proved it by the druggist who filled the prescription and by an analysis of two capsules he had saved out of the lot. What David forgot to mention was that, at medical school, shortly before he gave Eleanor the capsules, there had been lectures on morphine and its effects. Samples of the drug had been passed around among the students, who had been allowed to take it out of the bottles and handle it.

Some other things there were that he didn't tell about either! For example, the wife he already had, by a previous secret marriage, when he married Eleanor. Then there was the affair he had been pursuing, with a view to monetary gain, with a girl he had met since his marriage to Eleanor. Small wonder he was made frantic by Mrs. Potter's threat to disclose that he was, as she thought, her daughter's husband.

Then, in one important particular, his medical learning failed him. He didn't foresee that the autopsy on Eleanor would show morphine present in quantity, but no traces of quinine.

Of course, the jury knew that nobody had seen David fill one or more of those capsules with morphine. The whole case was circumstantial. Yet they convicted him of murder in the first degree.

Was it legal? Could a man's life swing on evidence like that?

"Evidence," said the learned appeal court that reviewed the jury's verdict, "is not to be discredited because circumstantial. It has often more reliable elements than direct evidence. Where it points irresistibly and exclusively to the commission by the defendant of the crime, a verdict of guilty may rest upon a surer basis than when rendered upon the testimony of eye witnesses, whose memory must be relied upon, and whose passions or prejudices may have influenced their testimony. If, taken together, it leads to a conclusion of guilt with which no material fact is at variance, it constitutes the higher form of evidence which the law demands where the life or liberty of the defendant is at stake, and neither jurors nor the court can conscientiously disregard it."

The facts that go into the making of a crime are of course unalterable and cannot be changed, but the accused has the right to explain them in a way that makes them seem innocent and harmless. "These things don't prove anything," is the plea of defense counsel in cases of circumstantial evidence, and many times court and jury agree with him. Yet, all unwittingly, the accused in a desperate effort to concoct a plausible explanation that will clear him often manufactures still more evidence against himself.

Does the accused answer questions evasively? Does he attempt to deny established facts? Does he contradict witnesses whose credibility is unquestioned? Does he make assertions that all the other facts in the case show to be absurd and untrue? Has he tried to suppress damaging evidence? Has he presented explanations that are obviously deceptive? Has he endeavored, by innuendo and otherwise, to cast suspicion on others without just cause? If he has done any of these things, says the law, they may be considered by the jury as links in the chain of circumstantial evidence tending to prove his guilt. Thus ironically do a culprit's frantic efforts to escape the law help to fasten its clutches upon him.

THE BLACK CAT

(*Continued from page* 11)

Although the hostel she had a room in was very special and inhabited exclusively by nice girls, she found life there quite lonely. So that when musical people started taking notice of her and asking her to their evenings, it made a lot of difference to her. That was the way she met old Mrs. Gillingham, who was never absent from any of the Knightsbridge evenings. She was a tradition. No musical evening was complete without her.

She had given a great many musical parties of her own in her big house in Hans Place, up to the time her son, Arnold, left for Dresden about four years ago; and it was hoped she would give a great many more, when her son came back from the opera at Stuttgart, a year or so from now. But in the meantime she had found it rather laborious to keep up the big house and to give parties on her own, so she had rented it and gone with one maid into a labor-saving flat round the corner.

The Gillinghams were a very musical family. Old Gillingham was, of course, the composer. His wife still played the 'cello with real charm. A great deal was hoped for from young Arnold after his intensive training and experience in Germany. But old Gillingham was dead. Arnold was away. A musical evening only begins in the evening. In other words, old Mrs. Gillingham was quite as lonely as young Jill Heathcote. The two women accordingly saw a great deal of each other, and entertained each other to lavish cups of tea and piled plates of meringues in the nice hostel and the labor-saving flat.

It was some little time after Jill's first recital that Mrs. Gillingham announced the glad news that her son had received an offer to sing in a newly-formed opera company in London and was coming back from Stuttgart in two or three months. Mrs. Gillingham was naturally extremely happy about it, but she had too much to do to have much time even to be happy. There was the house in general to get ready, not to mention a special private bathroom for Arnold, leading out of his bedroom. And then, of course, there was going to be a party for him. It was impossible to have Arnold coming back after all this time without giving a party for him. And it would be a pleasant way for him to meet all the people connected with the new opera company without any delay.

All this meant that for the next couple of months old Mrs. Gillingham and Jill Heathcote saw practically nothing of each other. And then, one morning, Jill had a telephone call from the old lady. She said she would go crazy if she didn't get away from the house and the party, for an hour or two. Would Jill be a darling and have tea with her at Gunter's and talk about something else to her for a little time. Jill never found any difficulty in being a darling with Mrs. Gillingham. They had tea together. The usual piled plates of meringues was set before them.

"You'll pour, Jill, won't you?" said Mrs. Gillingham. "I'm on holiday."

"Sugar? Milk? It's so long since we've met I've forgotten. I'm ashamed of myself."

"Sugar, please. And no milk. Lots of sugar."

"Oh, of course. Three lumps, isn't it?"

"Four. Isn't it funny?"

"What?"

"Arnold takes no sugar, but swamps his cup with milk!"

"Really?"

"He's a positive cat for milk."

"Oh really?" There was a faint crepitation at the back of Jill's neck. "Really?" she said again. "How odd!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Gillingham, "and talking about cats . . ."

"Were we?"

"I was saying that Arnold was as fond of milk as a cat. What's the matter with you, my dear?"

"Nothing. What on earth should be the matter?"

"Isn't it lucky? A black cat came into the house today. I found him in Arnold's room. He's just installed himself as if the place belonged to him."

"A black cat?"

"Yes. Won't Arnold be excited! And it's so lucky, too. A black cat!"

"With a little white arrow below its neck?"

"How very strange, Jill! Yes, with a little white arrow below its neck! What made you ask that?"

"Nothing, Mrs. Gillingham, nothing!"

"But how absurd, Jill! Do you know anyone near us who's lost a black cat with a white arrow?"

"No! I'll have some more tea, I think."

"My dear, your hand's shaking! I'll pour out for you! What on earth made you ask about that white arrow?"

"It was only that . . . when I was a little girl . . . we had a black cat with a white arrow . . . I was very fond of it!"

"Oh I see! Forgive me! I shouldn't have insisted! I had a dog, once when I was about your age. . . . Even now I can't bear to talk of it . . . Shall we order more meringues?"

"No, thank you, Mrs. Gillingham! I think . . . if we could get out into the open air . . ."

"Certainly, my dear." She called the waitress, then turned again to Jill. "Come early, darling, won't you? You're going to like Arnold. And I'm sure he's going to adore you. Yes, Jill, thanks. I'd love you to see me into my taxi. Till Tuesday, Jill."

"Till Tuesday."

TUESDAY came, bringing with it Arnold Gillingham and the party. Both were a great success. All musical London was there and though Mrs. Gillingham was not able to devote as much time to young Jill Heathcote as she would have liked to, her son, Arnold, made up for it. He was extremely attentive to her. The observation was made by quite a number of people that he had fallen for her. He hardly took his eyes off her face the whole evening. And that seemed rather unfortunate, for the young lady seemed to have no eyes for him at all. She seemed preoccupied, as if she were on the lookout for some other young man than Arnold Gillingham, some young man who had not turned up.

It was quite late in the evening before Jill managed to have a quiet word with old Mrs. Gillingham. She had been hovering round her for some time.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Gillingham," she said awkwardly. "If you don't mind my asking . . . I suppose you'll think it silly of me—"

"Yes, my dear, what is it?"

"I was rather looking forward to seeing it, I know it's stupid of me. Where is it?"

"What on earth do you mean, Jill?"

"The black cat—*you* know—with the white arrow."

"Oh, the black cat! Oh yes, of course! What a funny child you are! Let me see now, the black cat! I don't think I've seen him all day! But I've been so busy, Jill, haven't I, that you'd hardly expect—"

"Yes, of course, Mrs. Gillingham. Please forgive me. That'll be all right, Mrs. Gillingham!"

"Wait a moment, now, Jill, now that you bring the matter up." The old lady stood and thought for a moment. "I did notice this morning he wasn't there! Yes, so I did!"

"Where?"

"He's been lying along the foot of my bed every morning when I got up. It was quite pleasant seeing him there—company, you know. He

(*Please turn to page* 70)

SKIN TROUBLES
that had Defied Treatment
—completely cleared up when treated this way

Pimples (ACNE) and boils entirely disappeared as cause was removed

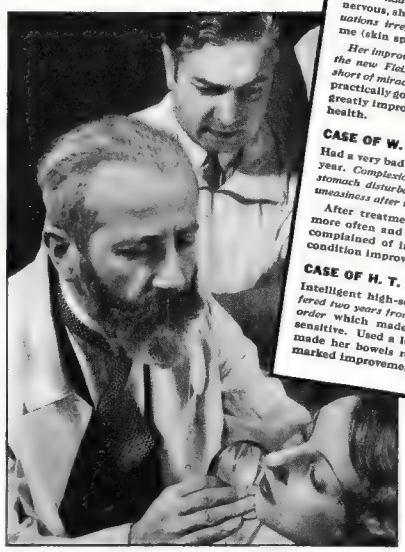
In a noted U. S. Skin Clinic, patients got these results:—

IN a leading American private clinic and two American hospitals, the new Fleischmann's Yeast gave improvement in 77%, 83% and 89%, respectively, of skin cases ("improvement" being defined as "a satisfactory clearing up of the skin lesion"). Typical cases from one hospital's records are:—

CASE OF L. T. WOMAN. AGE 27
Patient had very bad acne vulgaris. Was nervous, shy, shunned company. *Evacuations irregular.* This case surprised me (skin specialist's comment).
Her improvement under treatment with the new Fleischmann's Yeast was little short of miraculous. Her skin trouble is practically gone. Her nervous condition greatly improved . . . also her general health.

CASE OF W. D. YOUTH. AGE 18
Had a very bad case of pimples for one year. *Complexion sallow. Complained of stomach disturbances, belching, gas and uneasiness after meals . . .*
After treatment, his bowels moved more often and easily. He no longer complained of indigestion. His skin condition improved.

CASE OF H. T. GIRL. AGE 17
Intelligent high-school girl. *Had suffered two years from a common skin disorder* which made her irritable and sensitive. Used a laxative. The yeast made her bowels regular and gave a marked improvement in her skin.



Famous dermatologists found it astonishingly effective.

"Best corrective for most skin troubles," says Dr. Hufnagel.

"I used the new fresh yeast in three clinics with very successful results," writes Dr. Léon Hufnagel (at left), head of Department of Skin Diseases, Hospital of the Rothschild Foundation, Paris.

New food supplies "Protective Substances" not abundant enough in your diet. That's why it corrects an important cause of skin ills!

DISTRESSING skin troubles overcome—and general health greatly improved—simply by adding *one food* to the diet—

American hospitals are reporting this result in hundreds of their cases!

The commonest *cause* of common skin troubles, such as pimples and boils, is constipation. Constipation, it has now been found, can be *completely corrected* by supplying certain "protective substances" in the diet.

Ordinary foods—even fruits and vegetables—do not supply enough of these substances. One food supplies them in abundance . . . the new Fleischmann's Yeast!

This new Fleischmann's Yeast builds up a more *active* condition of your intestinal tract, increases the flow of stomach juices, and strengthens intestinal nerves and muscles.

As a result, your digestive tract works better. Bowels become "regular." Your skin clears up amazingly.

Eat the new Fleischmann's fresh Yeast *regularly*—don't stop after a few days. And eat it *right*—according to the directions below. Starting today!

Eat at least 3 cakes of the new Fleischmann's Yeast daily. Some people eat 4, 5 or even 6 cakes a day.

Eat it one-half hour before meals—on an empty stomach. If you miss a cake before one meal, eat 2 cakes before your next meal, or a cake at bedtime.

Eat it just plain—or dissolved in a little water, milk, or fruit juice.

Discontinue laxatives gradually (not all at once). After the yeast has strengthened your bowels thoroughly, you can stop using cathartics entirely.

You can get the new Fleischmann's Yeast at grocers, soda fountains and restaurants.

TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSION:

The new Fleischmann's Yeast speeded up elimination 48% after one month's feeding —as shown by patients' "charcoal time."

It is not only the richest *vitamin*-"carrying" food (supplying Vitamins A, B, G, D); it is extremely rich in a substance resembling a *digestive hormone*. Being fresh, this yeast releases its properties in the body in their most active form.

THE NEW FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST can give complete bowel regularity . . . help *keep* you free from constipation. It's a food, you know—not a medicine.

To make sure of the cause of your skin trouble—see a doctor.

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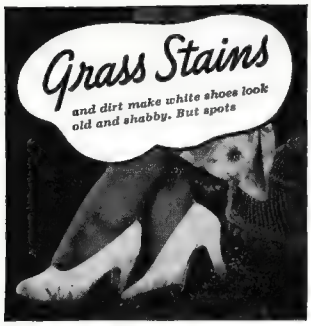
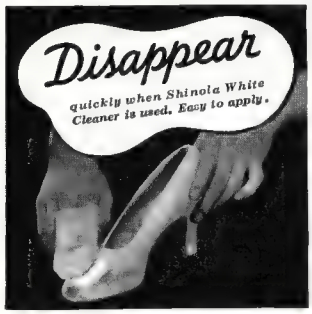




10¢ AT ALL STORES

★ Shinola White Cleaner dries quickly. After drying, the shoe should be rubbed or brushed. Shinola cleans and whitens; removes all stains and will not discolor shoes.

THE BLACK CAT

(*Continued from page* 69)

wasn't there this morning. I hope he's not gone off for good. Arnold would have loved him. Wait a moment. I always put a bowl of milk out for him on the balcony outside my room. I'll see if he's had it."

"Oh no, please, Mrs. Gillingham. You've so much to do. I've worried you enough already."

"Not at all, Jill. I'd like to know. Would you like to come with me, or will you wait?"

"Please, may I wait?"

"I'll not be a moment, Jill." Mrs. Gillingham went and returned. She looked quite crestfallen. "No," she said, "I'm afraid he's gone off again. He was such a nice creature. Arnold would have loved him."

"Perhaps he hasn't gone off," said Jill. "Perhaps he's about the house somewhere."

"Come along and have something to drink, my dear. You don't look at all well. It'll do you good."

ARNOLD GILLINGHAM proposed to Jill Heathcote rather more than a year after his return from Germany.

Their marriage was exceedingly happy. They had no children, so they both went on with their singing, he with his work in opera, she with her *Lieder*. But after a few years Arnold Gillingham found himself more and more fascinated by the actual drama of opera and more and more impeded by the necessity for converting it into florid language and unsubtle gesture. He became, in fact, an actor on the legitimate stage, where he scored so signal a success that before long America was clamoring for him. If America persists long enough, she usually has her way, and she had it with Arnold Gillingham. He went over to New York with a play in which he had scored high honors in London, and Broadway saluted him no less resoundingly.

It was a great grief to both of them that Jill could not accompany him, but a series of recitals in the Scandinavian capitals had been fixed up for her. They wrote to each other daily during the eight months of their separation, and when at last Arnold cabled that he had definitely turned his back on the siren lures of Hollywood, and would be with her in a week or two, she was as excited as a young bride on the morning of her wedding. It was, indeed, another honeymoon they were both looking forward to, and because it was the time of plumy white lilacs she had their flat as filmy with it as a snowstorm.

She drove down to Southampton to meet him, and almost fainted with joy when the ship came to at length against the dock-side, and she saw him, dark-haired and bright-eyed, leaning over the far-off rail, waving his handkerchief at her like a hysterical school-boy. The wait that followed seemed more than usually endless. They shouted at each other till their throats were hoarse, though they could not hear a word. Their arms felt as if they must fall from their shoulders, they had waved at each other so long and wildly. Then at last the clotted heaps of passengers along the decks disintegrated. Porters tore up the gangways for luggage, and staggered down again. The passengers disembarked.

But Arnold Gillingham did not disembark. Half-an-hour passed and an hour passed, and Arnold Gillingham did not disembark. Jill tore about from counter to counter in the customs shed, returned to the dock, seized stewards, customs officials, passport officials. His luggage was neatly stacked waiting for him at the G section of the counter. But he had not presented himself with his keys. He had not presented his passport. He had paid all his final tips on board ship, but he had not tipped the porter who had carried his luggage to the shed. He had not disembarked. Or if he had, he had disappeared.

He could not have disappeared from the customs shed. The boat-train had gone long ago, and it was impossible that the boat train had carried him off. He must be still on board somewhere. He must be wandering about somewhere, in a state of aphasia, or he had fallen down in a faint in some dark corner. But it is impossible to go wandering about in a liner without being seen; and no liner is so big that you can fall down in a faint in a dark corner without somebody finding you after a few hours' intensive search.

But Arnold Gillingham was not to be found anywhere. It was as if he had never been born.

JILL'S father and mother and Arnold's mother were wired for and arrived in Southampton within an hour or two of each other. They found Jill in a state of delirium in a hotel bedroom. It was not judged safe to move her from Southampton for a full week; and in any case she refused to go. The highways and byways of the city were scoured for Arnold, if, perchance, he had somehow slipped through the barriers. Patrols went out on the country roads. A description was sent out over the ether. But Arnold Gillingham was not to be found anywhere. After a month with her parents in the country, during which time she slowly fought her way back to sanity and convalescence, Jill returned at last to her small house in Hampstead, on the edge of the heath. She knew that some hideous mischance had befallen her husband. She knew with equal certainty that her husband was not dead.

On the morning after her return to Hampstead, it did not surprise her that there was a weight over her feet, which had not been there when she had gone to bed. She did not open her eyes for some time, realizing that if she screamed and tore her hair now, she would go irrevocably mad.

THE black cat with the white arrow was very devoted to her. He purred with pleasure when she came into the room. He rubbed up affectionately against her legs. She did not let fly at him in the effort to kick his small skull open. She said gentle words to him. She saw that his saucer was always full of milk. But she never bent down to stroke him. She felt that that might burn the flesh through to the bone.

He looked as beautiful as ever. His eyes were emeralds. His skin was glossier than the richest black velvet. He was, perhaps, just a little plumper and lazier than before.

It was about a week after he appeared that she requested her chauffeur to come into her room. As far as it was humanly possible, she saw that the black cat was not there, too. She looked under every piece of furniture, opened the two cupboards, saw that windows and doors were shut. No, the black cat was not there.

"Listen, Bennett," she said. "I want you to do me a great kindness."

"Yes, madame," he said.

"I hate asking you to do it. I want you never to say a word to anyone about it."

"You can rely on me, madame."

"You know that black cat that found its way into the house?"

"Yes, madame?"

"I want you to drown it. I want you to make sure you drown it."

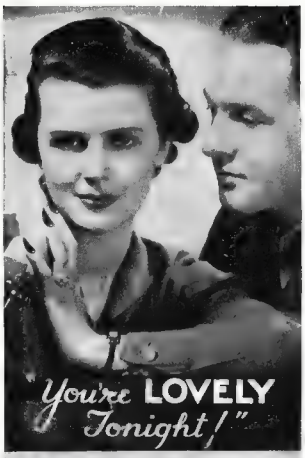
"I'll take every precaution, madame, I'll tie it up carefully in a sack. I'll drive over to one of the ponds on the heath with it. I'll put some bricks in the sack, too."

"I don't want to know what you'll do or where you'll do it—so long as it gets done. I want it done before tomorrow morning."

"It will be done, madame."

"Can I rely on you?"

"It will be done, madame."



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THE BLACK CAT

JILL had taken a tablet to keep herself asleep during the night, but she was conscious as the clock struck six. It would be hours before the maid came in to draw the curtains and to put down her morning tea. She did not dare to open her eyes, for fear they should rest upon a thicker smudge of darkness around the foot of her bed. She did not dare to move her feet, for fear that she would find a weight heavier than the bedclothes lying across them. She lay there prone for many minutes, hearing only the loud knocking of her heartbeats.

Then suddenly she lunged out under the bedclothes with her feet. Nothing impeded them save bedsheet and blanket and filmsy eiderdown, nothing at all. She thrust out toward her bed-side lamp, and switched it on. There was no cat on bed or chair or floor or anywhere she could see. She ran over toward the curtains and drew them. The room was flooded with dawn. She ran back into the room and lifted the bedclothes and hanging chintzes. There was no black cat anywhere. She thrust her thumb exultantly into the bell-push.

"I'm sorry, Johnson," she said, "to get you up so early. Make me a cup of tea at once. I want to get out!"

She felt as if she had sloughed off from her wrists and ankles a length of manacle that had been fettered to them she could not remember how long—for years now, since the unspeakable day in Southampton. She swung like a boy athlete across the slopes and ditches. If not tomorrow, then the next day, he would be at her side again. He would be back from the place where he was immured now, in a prison cell where no mirror hung in which he could see who he himself was, where there was no window through which he could gaze out toward the eyes of his love. The opaque enchantment would be broken. He would be back again.

She went home and got Bennett to take her out to Richmond Park, for she was too restless to stay at home and it was still too early to call on any of her friends. She did not want to get further away than Richmond Park, she did not want to get out of London at all. He might come back today. She must not be too far away when he came back. She would have lunch out, and tea out, and telephone every so often.

SHE did some shopping, buying silk stockings she did not need, of a shade she disliked. She went into two flower-shops and had two huge bouquets sent home. She called on several of her friends and stayed nowhere more than ten minutes. Her eyes were distended and her cheeks were flushed. They wondered what was wrong with her and consulted each other darkly over their telephones the moment she had left.

She telephoned home half a dozen times at least that day but no visitor had arrived. Evening came and she still postponed her return to Hampstead. She ordered a small meal in a restaurant in Dover Street, but could not eat it. She went into a cinema and after half-an-hour went out again. At last she requested Bennett to drive her home.

She assured herself she was not really disappointed he had not yet arrived. It was possible that he had been at the other end of the country the moment he had come to himself again. He might even have gone back to America when the ship had sailed again, and the whole ocean was between them. There might be a cable from him before he could himself arrive. She told Johnson she would like to go to bed immediately.

She fell asleep quite peacefully. She was very tired. She had been asleep for two or three hours when, as once before, she became aware she was not in the room alone. She heard a faint drawing of breath and a whimpering. She heard also a faint drip, drip of water. She did not dare to switch the light on. "Bennett! Bennett!" she shrieked, again and again. For a long time the sound was hardly more than a whisper. Then at last the sound ripped through the fabric of her terror. The light was switched on. Johnson and Bennett were both in the room beside her. She was still shrieking "Bennett" at the top of her voice. Her hands were pounding away frantically at the bedclothes.

"Please, madame!" Bennett soothed her, "please! Now please don't take on so! It's quite easy to explain! I'm very sorry indeed I didn't . . ."

"Is it there?" cried Mrs. Gillingham.

"It *was* there" said Johnson. "We've driven it out! It was soaking wet!

"The carpet is in a frightful state!" he added.

"I'm sorry, madame. I can't tell you how sorry I am. I'm afraid I've let you down badly."

"How . . . how . . ." she shouted. Then she fell into a violent fit of shuddering and could say no more.

"It bit and tore its way out of the sack. The mouth was full of blood, and the claws too.

"We'll have to send this carpet away to be cleaned," said Johnson.

Mrs. Gillingham seized Bennett's wrist. "Any cat could have done the same thing," she whispered. She stared at him dreadfully.

"I don't quite see what you mean, madame. Of course, madame. It was strong enough. It was a tough sack. I saw to that, at least."

Mrs. Gillingham turned round suddenly to the maid. "Go away," she said. "Put the kettle on! Make some tea!"

"Won't you take a glass of brandy, madame?" asked Johnson.

"Yes, I should, madame," said Bennett.

"You'll find some in the little cupboard," said Mrs. Gillingham. "Pour some out for me. Will you put that kettle on, Johnson?"

"Yes, madame, at once."

"Shall I hold the glass for you?" said Bennett. Her hands were shaking so that the brandy was trickling down her chin.

"Thank you." She finished the brandy, then she put her hands under the bed-clothes, as if the room was too cold for them. Then she lay back with her eyes shut for two or three minutes.

"Shall I go, madame?" whispered Bennett.

"Don't go," she bade him.

At length she opened her eyes again. They turned round toward his very slowly. There was a queer slyness in them.

"Listen, Bennett!" she said.

"Yes, madame?"

"There mustn't be any mistake next time."

"I beg your pardon."

"I want you to do it properly next time. I know exactly what I want you to do. There must be no mistake."

Bennett remained quite silent for a full half-minute. He seemed to sway slightly on his feet.

"I'm sorry, madame," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"I could do no such thing."

"Not . . ." she started, "not . . ."

"Not if it cost me my situation. No!" He shuddered. "No, madame! That is quite final!"

She closed her eyes again.

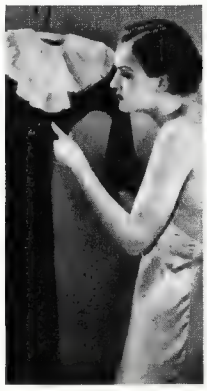
"Yes," she said. Her voice was extremely faint and tired. "I can quite understand. I will have to make my own arrangements."

"I'm very sorry indeed, madame. I couldn't. Not a *second* time!"

'CAT Saved After Week Down a Pit," the heading of the newspaper item ran. "A cat was tied in a sack and thrown down a flooded pit

(*Please turn to page* 72)

Every woman should make this "Armhole Odor" Test



No matter how carefully you deodorize your underarm—if any dampness collects on the armhole of your dress, you will always have an unpleasant "armhole odor." Test this by smelling your dress tonight

EVERY sophisticated woman realizes that to be socially acceptable she must keep her underarm not only sweet *but dry*. Those who deodorize only—because it is easy and quick—soon find out to their sorrow that the easy way is *not the sure way*.

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Ask your own physician about Odorono. Odorono was developed 23 years ago by a physician for use on his hands in operating. And medical authorities agree that it has no harmful effect on the underarm. Women use millions of bottles yearly. It does not dry up or injure the pores of the underarm in any way. It merely draws the pores together and diverts the underarm perspiration to other parts of the body where it can evaporate quickly without becoming offensive and embarrassing.

Examine your dress tonight

If you are not a regular Odorono user, when you take off your dress tonight, smell the fabric at the armhole. You may be horrified when you realize that that is the way you smell to anyone who is close to you.

Once you realize that *nothing*, not even dry cleaning, will completely remove this musty smell, you will understand why women who try short cuts to daintiness always come back to Odorono. In the end, Odorono is easier. It ends guesswork and worry scientifically and safely.

ODORONO comes in two strengths. Regular Odorono (Ruby colored) requires only two applications a week. Instant Odorono (Colorless) is for especially sensitive skin or for hurried use—to be used daily or every other day. You will want to have both in the house—for night or morning use.

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Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp., Louisville, Ky.

THE BLACK CAT

(*Continued from page 71*)

shaft in Lanarkshire more than a week ago, but it managed to get its paws through the sack and cling to a plank.

"During the week-end two miners heard it meowing. The authorities said 'No' to their request to be allowed to go down. But they managed to rescue it with a grappling-hook and a chain."

Mrs. Gillingham smiled as she folded the newspaper and put it away in a drawer. It was very reassuring to have it about and open it up when for a moment you felt the horror tingle at the scalp. The horror came only while the black cat with the white arrow was out of the room. As soon as it came into the room, horror went and hatred took its place. The foul interloper! The hellish thief! You black fiend, won't you get out of his way? Won't you let him come back? You won't, eh?

There'll be no grappling-hook and chain to lift you out, my pretty. There was never a hook and chain could lift a heap of cinders.

THE out-of-work plumber from Camden Town made no bones about it at all. It seemed money for jam to him. Five pounds! He would do the same thing to a bloke for five pounds, he assured her with a leer. That was a joke, of course, but it did not seem to her as funny as he thought.

She was present during the whole performance. When it was over she was so sick she could not move from the foul little room for an hour. But it was over, at all events. It had been dead enough at the bottom of the washing tub, with a flat iron tied round its neck. It had been dead enough after half-an-hour of that. If it wasn't there had not been much life left after the paraffin had been poured over it and the carcass had been burned before her eyes.

She came to herself after the hideous fit of vomiting, staggered along the street and round the corner, where Bennett was waiting for her. So she drove home. In both soul and body she now felt extraordinarily well at ease. She entered the house and went to bed immediately. She did not get up till late next morning. Her eyes were bright and clear as pansies. She ate a breakfast hearty enough for a ploughboy.

SHE was not impatient. She knew she could bide her time now. Arnold might return in a day or a week or a month, but he would return sure enough. She went about among her friends with a sort of furtive serenity on her face. They nudged each other's shoulders and talked behind their hands. They were convinced she had a lover and were delighted for her sake. At last she had someone in her life to take the place of that atrocious actor who had played so mean and wicked a trick on her.

She was not impatient. She knew that when he at last set out to come to her again he would convey a sign to her so that she should be waiting for him in the home where they had been so happy together.

On the second Saturday morning after the extermination of their enemy, she found herself awake an hour earlier than usual. She realized she was smiling, and was aware she smiled in the sweet certainty that his feet were now, at this moment in time and place, set on their way to her. She snuggled her head luxuriously into the soft pillow and stretched her arms out before her, knowing they were empty now and that her love would fill them some night soon and many years of nights to come.

"He'll come for tea," she said. "I feel sure he won't get here earlier than that. He's like a woman, preferring his tea to any other meal in the day."

She ordered tea for two that day, at five o'clock. "I'm expecting somebody," she said. "It's quite possible he won't get here in time, but you might as well lay the tea-table for two."

The piled silver tea-tray looked quite lovely in the leaping firelight reflecting the silver pot and jugs and the Spode ware. There were scones and potato-cakes and honey and two sorts of jam. There were meringues and eclairs, for he had inherited his mother's sweet tooth. But he had not come by five o'clock or by five-thirty. She knew he would not be coming then, for though he took more milk with his tea than tea, he did not like the tea to stand brewing in the pot. She made a good tea herself, then asked for the tray to be taken away.

She ordered tea for two the next day and the day after, but he did not come. He did not come on the fourth and the fifth day. On the next day when she ordered tea for two, there was a note of defiance in her voice. Her lips were thin and hard. When her housekeeper mumbled a word or two in acknowledgment of her order, she turned round furiously as if the woman had been insolent, and she would dismiss her on the spot. But no word left her mouth. Her mouth still wide open, she turned and walked heavily out of the room.

On the seventh day she could not bring herself to ring for the housekeeper to give her the day's orders. The woman came at length of her own accord. "Will madame be in for lunch?" she asked.

"Yes," said Mrs. Gillingham. She did not lift her head from her newspaper.

Then there was silence. Neither broke it for many seconds. Then at last, with fear in her voice, the woman brought out again: "And tea, madame?"

"Yes."

Once more there was silence. Mrs. Gillingham broke it in a whisper only just louder than the silence itself. "Yes," she said again, "for two."

FIVE o'clock came. He was, of course, not there. Five o'clock went by, minute upon eternal minute went by, and he was not there. She sat hunched up in her chair over against the tea-table. Her eyelids lay as heavily upon her eyes as the lead panels of a coffin. In the extremity of her woe her chin sagged down upon her bosom.

And then it was she heard the sound of a hand upon the outer door-handle. She did not open her eyes. For she knew she had not heard it. It was impossible that she had heard it. And then once more she heard the sound of a hand upon the outer door-handle, a hand too feeble to open the door, too feeble to do anything but shake the handle slightly in its socket. It was the hand of one who has come a long way, after encountering many and desperate obstacles.

Her eyes were wide open now. They were flooded with light like a glade of daffodils where the sun has just penetrated. Her cheeks flared like a swung lamp. She ran over toward the door and flung it wide to greet her lover.

But he was not there. She stood there, staring. She called his name out wildly three times, but he did not come. She turned toward the room again, like a creature swivelled on a pivot. There was a black cat with a white arrow on his chest, standing among the tea-cups, his legs firmly arched on the silver tray. The head was lowered toward the milk-jug, where he stood lapping daintily for several seconds. The tongue was as pretty as a piece of pink coral, like a lizard's tongue almost, the way it darted in and out. He looked as plump and well-conditioned as any cat had ever been before. He stopped lapping the milk at length, and raised his head, and looked steadily into her eyes.

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FILL THE JAM CLOSET

(*Continued from page* 41)

Crushed Strawberry Jam

7 cups (3 lbs.) sugar
4 cups (2 lbs.) strawberry pulp
½ bottle fruit pectin
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Measure sugar and strawberry pulp, as prepared above, into large kettle; add lemon juice and mix well. Bring to a *full* rolling *boil* over hottest fire. To reduce foaming, ¼ teaspoon butter may be added. Stir constantly before and while boiling. Boil hard 4 minutes. Remove from fire and stir in pectin. Pour quickly. Paraffin jam when cool. Makes about 10 glasses (6 fluid ounces each).

Combination Raspberry Jelly and Jam

4 quarts fully ripe raspberries

Crush or grind about 4 quarts fully ripe raspberries. Place in Canton flannel jelly bag to drip. To hasten dripping, turn pulp over about every 5 minutes, without opening jelly bag, by holding bag on each side and stretching cloth, thus bringing up bottom of bag. Drip until 4 cups juice have run through. Do not drip overnight as uncooked juice ferments quickly. Use juice for Raspberry Jelly.

Use 4 cups raspberry pulp left in bag for Raspberry Jam. If desired, part of pulp may be sieved to remove some of seeds before measuring.

Raspberry Jam

6½ cups (2⅝ lbs.) sugar
4 cups (2 lbs.) raspberry pulp
½ bottle fruit pectin

Measure sugar and raspberry pulp as prepared above, into large kettle, mix well, and bring to a *full rolling boil* over hottest fire. Stir constantly before and while boiling. Boil hard 1 minute. Remove from fire and stir in pectin. Then stir and skim by turns for just 5 minutes to cool slightly and to prevent floating fruit. Pour quickly. Makes about 10 glasses (6 fluid ounces each).

Red Raspberry and Currant Jelly

4½ cups (2¼ lbs.) juice
7 cups (3 lbs.) sugar
½ bottle fruit pectin

To prepare juice, crush thoroughly about 2½ quarts (3½ pounds) fully ripe currants and raspberries in equal amounts. Add ½ cup water, and bring just to a boil. Place fruit in jelly cloth or bag and squeeze out juice.

Measure sugar and juice into large saucepan; mix. Bring to a boil over hottest fire and at once add bottled fruit pectin, stirring constantly. Then bring to a *full rolling boil* and boil hard ½ minute. Remove from fire, skim, pour quickly. Paraffin jelly when cool. Makes about 11 glasses (6 fluid ounces each).

Harlequin Jelly

(Cherry, currant, raspberry and strawberry)
4 cups (2 lbs.) juice
7½ cups (3¼ lbs.) sugar
1 bottle fruit pectin

To prepare juice, crush ½ pound each fully ripe cherries and currants. Add ⅛ cup water. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer 8 minutes. Crush 1 pound each fully ripe raspberries and strawberries; add to simmered currants and cherries and continue simmering 2 minutes longer. Place fruit in jelly cloth or bag and squeeze out juice.

Measure sugar and juice into large saucepan and mix. Bring to a boil over hottest fire and at once add bottled fruit pectin, stirring constantly. Then bring to a *full rolling boil* and boil hard ½ minute. Remove from fire, skim, pour quickly. Paraffin when cool. Makes about 11 glasses (6 fluid ounces each).

Peach Jelly

3 cups (1½ lbs.) juice
6½ cups (2¾ lbs.) sugar
1 bottle fruit pectin

To prepare juice, remove pits from about 3½ pounds peaches. Do not peel. Crush peaches thoroughly. Add ½ cup water, bring to a boil, cover, and simmer 5 minutes. Place fruit in jelly cloth or bag and squeeze.

Measure sugar and juice into large saucepan and mix. Bring to a boil over hottest fire and at once add bottled fruit pectin, stirring constantly. Then bring to a *full rolling boil* and boil hard ½ minute. Remove from fire, skim, pour quickly. Paraffin when cool. Makes about 9 glasses (6 fluid ounces each).

Grape Jam

4½ cups (2¼ lbs.) prepared fruit
7 cups (3 lbs.) sugar
½ bottle fruit pectin.

To prepare fruit, slip skins from about 3 pounds fully ripe grapes. Simmer pulp, covered, 5 minutes. Remove seeds by sieving. Chop or grind skins and add to pulp. Add ½ cup water and if desired, grated rind of 1 orange. Stir until mixture boils. Simmer, covered, 30 minutes. (Wild grapes, Malagas and other tight-skinned grapes may be stemmed, crushed whole, simmered with ½ cup water 30 minutes, sieved, and then measured. With tight-skinned grapes add juice of 1 lemon to water. Use 4 cups prepared fruit.)

Measure sugar and prepared fruit into large kettle, mix well, and bring to a *full rolling boil* over hottest fire. Stir constantly before and while boiling. Boil hard 1 minute. Remove from fire and stir in bottled fruit pectin. Pour quickly. Paraffin jam when cool. Makes about 11 glasses (6 fluid ounces each).

Grape Jelly

4 cups (2 lbs.) juice
7½ cups (3¼ lbs.) sugar
½ bottle liquid fruit pectin

To prepare juice, stem about 3 pounds fully ripe grapes and crush thoroughly. Add ½ cup water, bring to a boil, cover and simmer 10 minutes. Place fruit in jelly cloth or bag and squeeze out juice. (Concord grapes give best color and flavor. If Malagas or other tight-skinned grapes are used, use 3½ cups grape juice and add juice of 2 lemons.

Measure sugar and juice into large saucepan and mix. Bring to a boil over hottest fire and at once add bottled fruit pectin, stirring constantly. Then bring to a *full rolling boil* and boil hard ½ minute. Remove from fire, skim, pour. Cool and paraffin. Makes 11 glasses (6 fluid ounces each).

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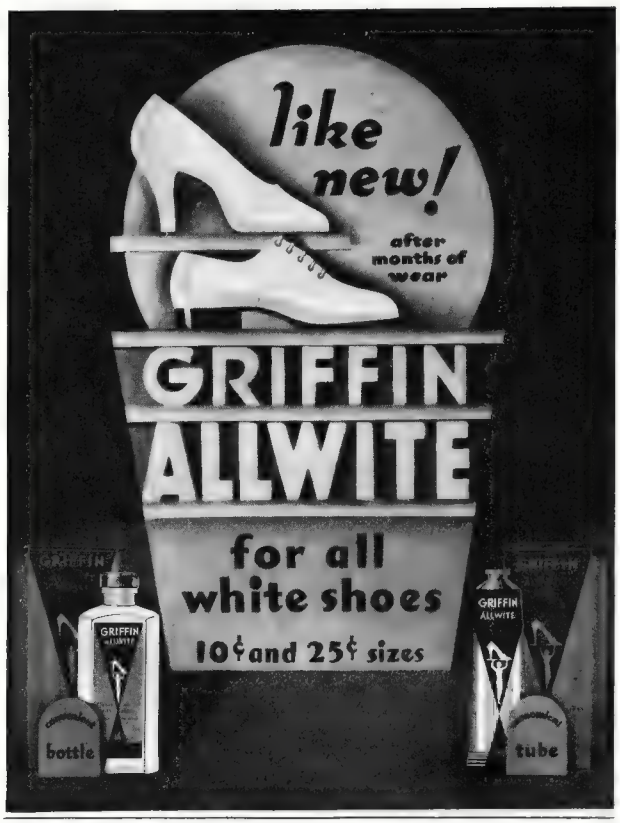

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OUT ON HIS FEET

(*Continued from page* 16)

hadn't gone off to Denver or Seattle. The morning paper was on the table. He reached for it, glanced at the date—Thursday the 20th; that was the day he had hoped would follow last night, last night having been Wednesday the nineteenth. Hell, the world was all right.

He pulled a silken cord, and as if that by direct connection had popped it open, a door swung and in came Chico, his valet—a Mexican, that is to say, an Aztec, a slender, slant-eyed Indian. Chico wished his master good-morning as he silently placed the scalloped silver tray with its glittering happy array of siphon, crystal bowl and glass, its decanter of Courvoisier on the table.

Chris sat up to take his medicine. He looked at it. He took a sip—a careful, lyrical little sip—and it went down cold, and in darkness was lost like a seed, but it was a seed that immediately sprouted, that blossomed into a sweet warmth and spreading strength.

Chris thought lovingly of Beth; and he thought, too, how swell it was to waken of a morning in your own home, in your own separated spirit, so to speak: to wake up, in short, a bachelor!

HERE he dropped the pretty crystal glass and it smashed. He stared at his hands. There was dried brown blood on them. There was blood on his pillow, too. He threw that pillow across the room, jumped out of bed and in three long strides was through his bathroom door and into the deep green water of the sunken tub. And he washed himself. And the blood wasn't his. No, it wasn't his.

"Chico!" he yelled. Chris Coghlan was scared. He was so scared as he stood under an icy shower, Chico rubbing his back, that he pulled a clear memory out of last night's blank . . . Osborne. Osborne and Beth on the terrace. Chris remembered his own blazing anger as he, coming on them from behind those damn extravagant show-off peach trees up there on the thirty-second floor—as he saw how Beth had to pull her arm from Osborne's grasp; and then . . . Well, then it was blank.

"Chico!" Chris said, and whirled around to look the fellow in his slant eyes . . . "How was I last night—this morning—when I came home?"

Chico's jet pupils moved slightly, a flicker of cold light: "Bloody, Signor!" He added: "I burn your shirt; too much; all over." He put the enormous turkish towel into the covered basket. "I say, 'How you get like this?' You shove me away. You have been running, Signor. You are breathing, so—like the toro before he gets the spada. You shove me. You say: 'Chico pack, pack quick! We go to Mexico. So I pack. So when is done all I come back here and you are asleep, Signor."

As Chico talked he swiftly aided his master to dress. Chris hadn't even noticed it was the brown tweed. As Chris turned to the mirror to knot a tie he had blindly chosen he looked into his own staring eyes. In swift sequence, in the frightful clarity of his high-speed imagination, Chris saw old Judge McKenzie, his shock of white hair, his callous yawning—showing gold molars— Chris saw himself, Chris Coghlan, the great mouthpiece, the district attorney's own Enemy Number One, Chris Coghlan not down there, conquering another jury; but there, up there, up there—the defendant being tried for murder. His shoulders were stiff, his right hand was stiff and sore. He spread the fingers open and closed them. Chico (born of a race that think blood and death are funny) smiled with pleasure at whatever picture his master's gesture engendered in his dark and secret mind. . . .

The door opened. Doctor George Fulton Searles, the famous—the infamous surgeon, specialist in women—and how—came quietly into the room.

He was a small man, a damned fop with pointed shoes and spats and smooth, too-smooth gray clothing. He had an obscene little, sharp-edged beard, quite black, and wide undefined eyes, like oysters if that's a decent simile. He fastened those eyes in a long straight gaze on Chris's clear, terrified blue ones.

"So you're still here?" Dr. Fulton said at last.

"And why the hell shouldn't I be here? How'd you get in?"

"The elevator is functioning. I rode up in it. Your door is unlocked. I opened it. You're not very friendly, this afternoon."

"What do you want?"

Doctor Fulton raised his hands a little. His eyes shifted. He started to say something, hesitated. His shifting eyes saw the bloody pillow where it lay in a corner. "Blood?" said he softly. He looked from Chico to Chris. "I see blood," he said.

Chris ran to him, caught his gray lapels, shouted into his face. "Tell me, for God's sake. What happened? Fulton, I drew a blank! From the time Beth and Osborne had words on the terrace, I can't remember a detail, not a thing, not a word. Tell me!" shaking him. "What did you come here for? Tell me!"

Fulton shoved at him. His strength was mild. He had a more powerful weapon. Words. "Take it easy, Counselor," he said. "You don't know your strength!"

"That's God's truth, I don't!"

Freed, the little doctor stepped back, straightened his clothing. "You strangled him." He licked his thin, gray lips: "After you had struck him full in the face. It smashed his nose, splintered the sinus. He bled."

Chris stared at his own hands. He was white. A muscle in his left cheek worked visibly. The bright world, all hope was smashed.

Doctor Fulton walked to a window, pulled down the tapestry curtains, gazed down at East Sixtieth Street and Central Park. He said, after a moment, and without turning: "Christopher, I've got to tell you something. Can you take it? Get yourself a drink."

"The hell with that. Tell me. It's worse waiting for the unknown than . . ."

"The police are there now, District Attorney Brandon himself."

"Yes? Go on, go on. Am I suspected?"

The doctor turned slowly. He whistled an exclamation. "Suspected, for God's sake! Your fingerprints are everywhere. The butler saw you running off, the elevator boy. . . . It's a clear case. You could plead insanity," Doctor Fulton said evenly. "I'd back you up there. Beth could testify. . . ."

"She could not testify. I'll not drag her into this." He saw Brandon at that trial. He saw more. The bughouse; the end of his career; he saw the D. A.'s vengeful satisfaction. He saw what he, Christopher Coghlan must do, according to his lights, his personality. The decision hardened in him. Dr. Fulton, watching, licked gray lips, asked a question with his faint eyebrows.

"But thank you, Doctor."

"You're welcome, Counselor."

Chris looked around, called, "Chico. Oh, where the devil's that Indian! Chico." Chico didn't answer. "He beat it. Moves like a shadow, that one. Will you excuse me, Doctor?"

"Yes, indeed."

Chris's study opened from the bedroom. He went in there, sat down to his huge Provence table that served as his desk; slid open its drawer, took out a .38 automatic. He lay this on the table—placed a sheet of note paper carefully in the center of the blotter, took his pen from its holder and wrote:

OUT ON HIS FEET

"Dearest Beth: The course I chose is ugly; but not as ugly as a trial murder would have been. . . ."

Dear God, how trite it sounded. All he wanted to do was state a fact, give her one plain word instead of the horror of silence, of never knowing just what he had thought . . . but words such as these had been written so many times by so many fellows as hopeless as he, they were worn out; they stank of self-pity or melodrama. "Sorry about Osborne," he wrote, "I love you. Good-bye now. Chris." On the wall beside him was a large mirror with a deeply carved walnut frame. He looked into it. Raised the pistol, put the muzzle to his temple. Clearly he felt how Chaos had won; how this was nightmare; this, this was the fundamental truth of the world—naked might, an idiot's tale.

CHRIS straightened the barrel of the pistol. The door at his back was open. Through this, reflected in the mirror, he saw Chico, the slender slant-eyed Indian. Chris saw only his contorted dark face at first; and then it was gone behind the form of Dr. Fulton. Doctor Fulton's sharp black beard pointed at the ceiling; his thin neck was lost in the brown grip of Chico's slender hands; and everywhere, on tapestry and deep rug, all about those two attached and tranced figures, straining, unmoving, everywhere lived the awful silence of doom.

Chris did not move. He gazed into the mirror. He watched a knife float straight upward, point down, formal, as for an Aztec ceremonial. He saw Chico's eyes, blaze wide open, his white teeth tear the gloom in a grin of pure joy, and widen. The pistol fell from Coghlan's hand. Its thump on the table broke the spell. Chris raised his voice in a shout of warning. In the hesitation that this sent to Chico's slender arm, Chris ran in there and with a terrible blow under the ear sent Chico falling and rolling on the rug where he lay face down, with a whimper like a dog who has been lost. Dr. Fulton fell into a chair and collapsed there as if his clothes were empty.

Chico got his head up. He was bleeding from the mouth.

"His knife," he gasped. "I am hide there." He pointed at the curtains.

"What? What's that?"

"His knife."

Chris picked Chico up; lay him carefully upon the touseled bed. "His knife, Chico?"

"He take it out so," Chico said. "He look. I know what he do. I see all. He mean to hide that knife."

"Then he brought it with him?"

Chris looked down at Dr. George Searles Fulton. "You killed Osborne with that knife?"

"With that knife," Dr. Fulton said.

"But why did you bring it here?"

"I meant to throw it away—to hide it—no opportunity presented itself."

Both of them, no, all three of them, had been within a second of death. It added to them. Doctor Fulton whispered: "Could I have a drink?" and as Coghlan handed it to him: "Thank you, Counselor."

"You're quite welcome."

Dr. Fulton whispered: "Will you join me?"

"What? No, Doctor, no." Chris was consulting that new conviction in himself: "No," he said, "I'm off it." And he nodded his head.

"Perhaps that's better—for your sort."

"In a minute," Chris went on, thinking it out, "I'd have been dead by my own hand, and in there would lay my confession of your murder and in here in my blood-stained bed the D.A.'d been delighted to find your blood-stained knife. Thank you, God. Thank you, Chico.

Chico stirred slightly. "Nothing," he said.

"But how did you know I'd drawn a blank," Chris asked.

Dr. Fulton smoothed his beard. "I didn't. I came here to borrow a thousand to get away on. I didn't even know you'd quarreled with Osborne. Oh, I've hated that louse for years. I did for him, at last. I hid till he'd staggered off to bed, the last of you drunks had gone home; but I woke him first. . . . He knew who I was; he knew I knew he had reported an operation that was . . ." he grinned a sadistic remembering grin—"that was an unsuccessful operation." Dr. Fulton drank again. His voice was stronger. He straightened in his chair. He said: "I came here for money. Before I could ask I saw your agitation. Then I wondered. I waited. I needed only to wait. You told me plenty and as you told me I saw a better way out for me than flight."

"But that blood on the pillow. It is blood!"

"I don't know about that—you see you left fairly early—in your car with Beth Harriman."

"'Fairly early,'" Chris frowned. He crossed to pick up the pillow. He tried to remember. A door slammed loudly, he whirled and ran to his study door. It was closed, locked. Dr. Fulton was in there.

As he ran his shoulder against the panels the doorbell rang and rang again. Chico, weak but dutiful, started for the entrance. Before he'd left the room Brandon, the district attorney, and two dicks—bulked in.

The D. A. had a sharp high voice. He was a youngish man, blond, long-faced.

"Hello, Coghlan! Where have you hidden Fulton? Don't stall— Oh, he's here; he was followed. You're going to turn him over to us now—or you're going to the can, Coghlan, for harboring . . ."

In the library something happened. An explosion happened. The going-off of a .38 calibre cartridge and the entrance of its pointed nose into the eardrum of Dr. Fulton.

A few minutes later, the door a splintered wreck, Chris was saying: "Where Fulton's gone there probably aren't any drunken lawyers. But, Brandon, I've climbed on the well-known water wagon. Now," he wise-cracked as his spirits soared, "now, Brandon, you won't convict *anybody*." And he laughed in his old careless way.

"Taking orders already? Well, well!" It was Brandon's turn to laugh. As he laughed the detectives presumed to laugh also. Coghlan's handsome face relaxed; puzzlement and foreboding rode his brow again.

"What is it?" he begged to know. "What are you talking about."

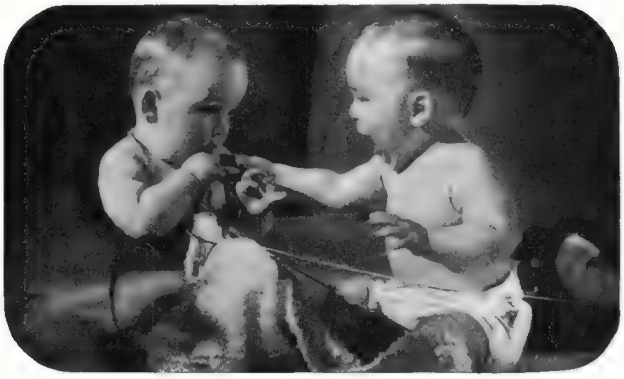
"Why Beth Harriman! The beautiful and energetic lady who so honored you last night—who—say, listen it's no secret, old man; it's in the papers—Rosie, show him that *Journal* you have. I want to congratulate you, we all do. . . ."

Brandon looked at the brandy bottle. He looked at Chico; Chico ran like an Aztec for glasses and ice while Coghlan stared at a headline that said he'd smashed his well-known imported automobile near West 178th Street speeding back from Ardsley-on-Hudson where he had been united in marriage with that beautiful, very prominent society girl, and so forth, who had suffered a cut on the hand—windshield—and so the honeymoon to Bermuda was postponed till next Saturday. . . ."

"Oh, God," Chris said, as the District Attorney choked and splattered brandy in all directions: "I *knew* I'd forgotten something!" And he reached for a glass, too; but there wasn't any there, which reminded him that he was on the wagon. The telephone bell was ringing, anyway. It seemed to ring in an insistent sort of way.

"There's a good boy," the D. A. said. "Now you tell her where the so-and-so you've been all this long day. That's how it is now, my boy!"

"Funny-tasting stuff . . . this knitting! Can't say the brown kind is particularly good. Not much flavor. How's that white stuff you've got, Brother — lemme try a mouthful of that!"



"Say, this is swell—a nice long, hard bone in it! Feels great on that place where there's going to be a new tooth next week. No — you can't have it! I found it! G'wan off — it's mine!"

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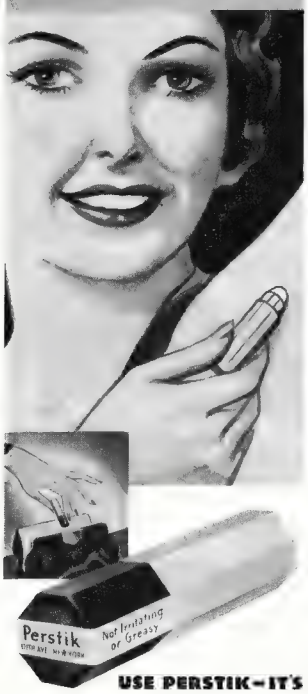

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THE DOCTOR AND THE LUNATIC

(*Continued from page* 19)

behind such insensate vandalism; and only a lunatic acts without motive."

"On the contrary," said Matthew Kelton, "no man has stronger reasons than the man who has lost his reason. He is driven to do strange and dreadful deeds by an imperious, pitiless logic. You see, he knows he is right though all the world may say he is wrong. Suppose he believes that he is responsible for the sins of mankind and must sacrifice himself to save the human race from destruction. What does he do? Well, one poor fellow some years ago crucified himself in Central Park. He was indignant when they took him down and saved his life. He had done the right thing—as he saw it. There was a powerful reason behind his act."

"What reason had that scoundrel for destroying our property," asked General Bannerman. "Spite?"

"Possibly," said Kelton. "That is, if we three have, to use your phrase, a common enemy."

"Looks like it," said Abernathy.

Matthew Kelton shook his white head.

"I cannot believe in this common enemy," he said. "Why should we have a common enemy when we have so little in common? Our paths have crossed but seldom in the present, and never, I think, in the past. You, General, have spent most of your life abroad, haven't you?"

"Quite so."

"And you, Squire, have always lived here in Mallow."

"That's right."

"And I," said Kelton, "have spent a rather quiet life in my laboratory in New York City and my rose garden at Oyster Bay, until I moved here three years ago. I must confess I can see no direct links between the soldier, the farmer and the chemist."

"Can't, myself," said the General.

"Nor can I," said the Squire.

"The common denominator, then," averred Kelton, "must be in this man's mind."

"A warped and twisted mind, remember," said Bannerman.

"Then we must look for a warped and twisted motive," said Kelton. "And that takes us into the shadowy realms of morbid psychology. I therefore think we should ask Dr. Clement Canfield to help us."

"Dr. Canfield?" said the General. "Oh, yes, that's the fellow who bought the old Griggs place on Battle Hill. Retired from active practice, hasn't he?"

"Yes," said Kelton, "but in his time he was the foremost alienist and brain surgeon on the Pacific Coast. His operations were medical classics."

"Can we get him?" said Abernathy.

"I'm sure we can," said Kelton. "I've always found him most obliging. He takes a great interest in everything affecting the community."

"A dashed valuable ally for us," said the General. "Expert advice. Heaven knows we need it. Will you phone him, Kelton, and ask him to come over?"

"Immediately," said Matthew Kelton. Presently he reported that Dr. Canfield would come over directly.

THE eminent surgeon and psychiatrist joined them in twenty minutes. He was a well built man in the forties, whose wise, professional face bore a full beard. Kelton tersely told him what had happened.

"You came to the right shop, gentlemen," said Dr. Canfield. "My field, decidedly. Fact is, I had a case very like this one out west. Young banker, he was, a fine chap, liked and respected by everybody. He seemed as sane as any of us sitting here. He did his work efficiently, and cut quite a figure in society; but, periodically, his mind jumped the tracks, and then—"

The three listeners leaned toward him.

"And then," pursued Dr. Canfield, "he became as dangerous as a cobra."

"In what way?" asked Kelton.

"He destroyed things," replied Dr. Canfield.

"What things?"

"It began," said the doctor, "in a relatively trivial way. A statue of Venus in the sunken garden of an estate was found one morning thrown down and mutilated with a chisel. Hoodlums, we all thought. Then a rock was hurled through the stained glass window of a church, a window considered one of the finest in the country. Soon after that an attempt was made to burn down the private library of a wealthy man which contained many priceless old books and *objets d'art*. I sensed a connection between the crimes; but neither I, nor anybody, suspected that they were done by Gabriel Fenwick—"

"What happened next?" asked Kelton.

"Important for us to know," put in Bannerman. "Marked similarity between the two cases. Same pattern. Our man may do the same thing. . . . What did Fenwick do?"

"He did not stop at destroying—*things*," said the doctor, gravely.

"Good Lord," cried Abernathy, "do you mean he turned killer?"

"Yes," said Dr. Canfield. "There was a girl, an unusually beautiful girl—and, well, the details aren't nice. Gabriel Fenwick was caught red-handed, literally red-handed, beside her battered body."

"What did they do to him?" asked Bannerman.

"On my testimony he was adjudged insane," Dr. Canfield told them. "He was put away in a place where he can do no more harm."

"He may have escaped," said Abernathy.

"I'm positive he has not," said Dr. Canfield.

"Positive?"

"Absolutely," Dr. Canfield said, "I've kept in close touch with the case. I had more than a scientific interest in it. You see, poor Fenwick was my oldest and best friend."

"A flower, a dog, a picture," mused Matthew Kelton, "and next? Gentlemen, we *must* find that man."

"And soon," said Bannerman. "Doctor, how can we tell him when we see him?"

"You can't," said Dr. Canfield. "Unfortunately our man will bear no outward and visible signs of his sinister nature. Nor will his conduct or conversation betray him. I'm considered an expert in such matters, and I knew Gabriel Fenwick intimately, but I never suspected his condition, nor would I have believed he was guilty had he not been caught in the act. So, our quarry may be—anybody. He may be you—or you—or you—"

His finger stabbed at the three men in turn.

"We must warn everybody in the county to be on their guard," Squire Abernathy declared.

"Against whom? Against what?" snapped Bannerman. "We don't know the man. We don't know how or where or when he'll strike next. Why throw the whole countryside into a panic, and make the wretch wary?"

"I agree with Abernathy," Kelton said. "We should issue a warning. It's a forlorn hope, I grant you; but in this desperate emergency we must grasp at every straw."

"Then," said the Squire, "I'll get Jennings of the Mallow *Sentinel* to plaster this affair all over his front page tomorrow."

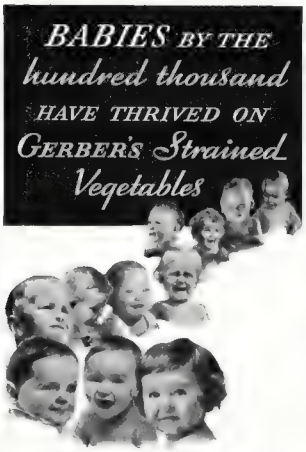
General Bannerman considered a moment.

"Very well," he said, "We need all the weapons we can get. How about offering a reward?"

"Sound idea," approved Kelton.

"Make it ten thousand dollars," said the General. "I'll underwrite that."

"I'll subscribe my share," said the Squire.



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THE DOCTOR AND THE LUNATIC

"And so will I," said Kelton.

"Let's split it four ways," said Dr. Canfield. "I want to be in this, too."

"Done!" said Abernathy. "If anybody has a scrap of evidence or the shred of a clue, money will make them talk. We'll cover the county with reward broadsides."

"We did all that out West," said Dr. Canfield, somberly. "It didn't stop Fenwick."

Kelton paced the porch.

"If we could only anticipate what he may do," he said.

"How can we?" General Bannerman spoke testily. "We're sane, presumably. We know right from wrong. Understand cause and effect. How can a man of sense predict what a man without sense will do?"

"But I tell you our man has a purpose, a motive," asserted Kelton, doggedly. "A pattern, you yourself said, General. For look! He has not run amuck and broken blindly whatever came first to his hand. No, each time he sought out and destroyed one single, perfect, beautiful thing. He must have a reason, perverted if you will, but a reason none the less."

Mrs. Kelton came out of the house.

"Lunch is ready," she announced. "Perhaps you gentlemen will stay—"

"I'm sorry, but I've an engagement," said the General.

"Thanks," said the Squire, "but I must hustle right down to the village and see about getting out those reward posters."

"Will you stay, Dr. Canfield?" asked Kelton.

"Delighted to lunch with you," said the doctor.

General Bannerman and Squire Abernathy left, after arranging to have another conference at the General's home that evening.

"WE call it lunch," said Mrs. Kelton to the doctor, "but it's really dinner, I guess. We're still old-fashioned enough, Matt and I, to take our chief meal in the middle of the day."

"Then I'm in luck," laughed Dr. Canfield. "I'm blessed with an old-fashioned appetite."

"We're having a roast chicken," said Mrs. Kelton, as they sat down at the dining-room table. "Raised on our own place."

"Excellent," said Dr. Canfield.

"Perhaps you wouldn't mind carving, Doctor," said Matthew Kelton. "I've a touch of neuritis, in my arms, and the art of carving (for it is an art) is a closed book to Mrs. Kelton."

"I'll do my best," promised Dr. Canfield, picking up the carving knife. "Light or dark, Mrs. Kelton?"

"A little of each, if you please, Doctor."

Dr. Canfield eyed the bird meditatively, and then began slowly to carve.

"Oh, I am sorry," he exclaimed. "Must have struck a bone."

The carving knife had slipped from his hand and fallen to the floor. He bent and retrieved it.

"That's quite all right, Doctor," said Mrs. Kelton. "You should see the hash I make of the carving job."

Dr. Canfield attacked the chicken again, and managed to get off several thick pieces.

"I am making rather a botch of it," he said cheerfully. He twisted loose a leg. "Well, this is one case where the end justified the means."

They discussed roses for a time, and then Kelton said:

"Tell me, Doctor, in confidence, is it possible that either Bannerman or Abernathy could be the man we're after?"

"Possible, oh, yes," said Canfield.

"Those footprints were made by a big man," remarked Kelton. "The Squire and the General are both big men. And both have a reputation for eccentricity. Still they seem so solid, so sensible—"

"They're good fellows. I like them both," said Dr. Canfield. "But, Kelton, my experience has taught me that the surface of a man means nothing."

"Do you suspect either of them?" inquired Kelton.

"I suspect everybody," said the doctor, soberly.

"Even me?" smiled Mrs. Kelton.

"I said 'everybody'," replied Dr. Canfield.

"But," said Kelton, as he helped the doctor to home-made elderberry wine, "it's hard for me to imagine Abernathy killing a valuable dog he was extremely fond of, or Bannerman damaging a favorite picture."

"It was equally hard to imagine Gabriel Fenwick harming the girl to whom he was engaged," said Dr. Canfield, drily.

They talked a while after lunch, about the mental condition of the man who had shattered the rose, and Kelton got lost in a maze of technicalities. Then Dr. Canfield departed, and Matthew Kelton sat on his porch and smoked many thoughtful pipes. It was late in the afternoon when a gangling figure in overalls approached the porch and broke in on Kelton's speculations. He recognized his visitor as Charley Sessions, the local milkman.

"Well, Charley," said Kelton, "what can I do for you?"

"I seen them notices," said Charley. "About the ten thousand dollars, I mean—"

"Yes?" said Kelton. "You know something?"

"'Taint much, I guess," said Charley.

"Tell me, anyhow," directed Kelton.

"Well, Mr. Kelton," said Charley in his high drawl, "I was out deliverin' on my milk route, like as always, this mornin' and as I was a-comin' down Red Coat Lane from the old Griggs place I seen a man a-walkin' up the lane. Thinks I, 'You're out mighty early. Now who can you be?'—but I never did find out because when he seen me he dove all of suddent into the bushes and scuttled away like a rabbit. Thinks I—'That's a funny thing for a fella to do' so I says to myself—"

"You did not recognize him then," interrupted Kelton.

"No, sir. It was before sun-up and it's sort of dark and spooky in that lane anyhow. There was just a little gray light and it all happened so quick I didn't get a good look at him—"

"Can you describe him?"

Charley scratched his head.

"Well, he was a man—not big and yet not little—but bigger than he was little—I think—and I think he had on dark clothes like a undertaker wears, but I couldn't swear to that—and I think his face was black—like a fella in a minstrel show—"

"Burnt cork," muttered Kelton. "An old war-time trick. A white face shows in the moonlight—"

"Huh?" said Charley.

"Never mind."

"Can I have the ten thousand dollars now?" asked Charley.

Kelton chuckled.

"Not yet awhile," he said. "If your information leads to anything, you'll get a fair share of the reward, I guarantee that."

"Thank you, Mr. Kelton," said Charley, and turned to go. Near the gate he stopped, and said—

"Somethin' else I just thought of."

"What?" asked Kelton.

"'Taint none of my business, and mebbe it has nothin' to do with nothin', but I got an idea that Dr. Canfield ain't the only one who lives up there in the old Griggs place."

"Nonsense, Charley," said Kelton. "Dr. Canfield lives all alone. I know. I've visited him often."

"Well, mebbe," said Charley. "But yesterday mornin' I hear two voices

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THE DOCTOR AND THE LUNATIC

(Continued from page 77)

in that house, a high one and a low one—"

"What were they saying?"

"I couldn't make out," said Charley. "But if there wasn't two men there, I'm a Chinaman; and, Mr. Kelton, that ain't the first time I've heard those two voices. No, sir."

"Interesting," commented Kelton. "Charley, don't tell anybody else what you've just told me."

"Do I get the ten thousand dollars?" said Charley.

"We'll see about that later," said Kelton. "Run along now and keep your mouth shut."

"Yes, sir," said Charley, and slouched away.

MATTHEW KELTON jumped into his car and drove swiftly along the winding roads till he came to Red Coat lane. He turned into it, and mounting Battle Hill, reached the old Griggs place with its sprawling mansion, relic of the days when American architecture reached its lowest ebb, congeries of cupolas, bulging bay-windows, unwarranted verandas hideous with jig-saw fretwork. This was the house Dr. Canfield had bought when he moved to Mallow some fifteen months before. It was a sagging, unkempt shell of a house when he took it, but a corps of workmen, brought from Albany to the disgust of the local contractors, had made it ship-shape and habitable, without, however, adding anything to the charm of its exterior.

Kelton rang the bell and Dr. Canfield came to the door.

"Glad to see you, Kelton," he said, cordially. "You have news. I can tell that. Well, sit down and tell me."

"I'll come straight to the point," said Matthew Kelton. "Doctor Canfield, have you another person living in this house?"

"Dr. Canfield looked back steadily at Kelton.

"You've guessed my secret," he said, quietly. "I supposed that sooner or later it was bound to come out. I might as well tell you the story now."

"I think you don't have to tell me who your prisoner is," said Kelton.

"No, I don't," said Dr. Canfield. "And let me tell you, Kelton, I'm not ashamed of what I've done. I could not bear to see poor Fenwick shut away in some horrible institution, when I could take care of him. I've broken no law. The courts committed him to my care. I'm responsible for him, legally, and morally, too—"

"Morally? What do you mean?" Kelton asked.

"I was driving the car when Fenwick was cracked up," said the doctor. "I'd had a few drinks. If I'd been stone sober, I might have averted the accident. I'm only trying to make what poor amends I can—"

"Let me ask you another blunt question, Doctor," said Kelton.

"Go ahead. I've nothing to conceal."

"Was Gabriel Fenwick out last night?"

"I give you my word, Kelton, he did not leave this house last night—or at any time since he came here," said Dr. Canfield.

"He might have slipped out without your knowledge," said Kelton.

"Not possible," said Dr. Canfield.

"I must be sure of that," said Kelton.

"Very well," said the doctor. "Let your own eyes convince you. Wait here, please. I'll go up and tell Fenwick you want to see him. An unexpected visitor might bring on one of his attacks."

Kelton waited in the living-room among the stolid and unshapely furniture. He heard the doctor's tread on the stairs, and the clang of a steel door. Presently Dr. Canfield called down.

"You can come up now, Kelton."

Dr. Canfield met him at the head of the stairs.

"The poor chap lives in here," he said indicating a door. "I had a large room made escape-proof. Steel walls, barred windows, and look at that door—"

Kelton examined the door.

"Why, it's like the door of a bank vault," he said.

"That is precisely what it is," said Dr. Canfield. "It can only be opened from the outside by an intricate combination; and I am the only man alive who knows that combination."

"But the window—" began Kelton.

"You'll see," said Dr. Canfield, and started to manipulate the dials on the massive, metal door. In two minutes it swung open. Kelton stepped into a spacious room, plainly but comfortably furnished with leather easy chairs, a refectory table, and a four-poster bed. On the bed he saw a man, asleep. The face of the sleeping man was an unusually handsome and sensitive face in spite of its pallor and emaciation.

"May I wake him?" whispered Kelton.

"No use trying," said Dr. Canfield. "I found him like this —— in one of his stupors. They're characteristic of his malady, you know. He'll sleep like this for seven or eight hours, and nothing can rouse him. So examine the room if you want to. Satisfy yourself that Fenwick could not have committed last night's crimes."

Carefully and without haste, Matthew Kelton made a thorough examination of the room. He tapped walls, floors, ceiling and felt the steel beneath his knuckles. He tested every heavy bar at every window. They were firm and showed no marks as they must have had they been tampered with.

"Well, Doctor," he said, finally, "I don't see how a man could get out of this room."

"Then," said Dr. Canfield, as he closed the steel door after them and reset the combination, "we must look elsewhere for our criminal."

"Yes," conceded Kelton, "we must look elsewhere."

Dr. Canfield escorted him to his car.

"Be sure to phone me if anything breaks," said the doctor. "If I'm needed, ring me up no matter what the hour is."

"Yes, yes, of course," said Kelton, absently. "Good-bye."

Thrice, though he drove home at a snail's pace, Kelton nearly went off the road; for his mind's eye was focused on a whirling kaleidoscope of conflicting facts, and he was as bewildered by what he saw as if he were mentally color-blind. Fenwick could not get out. But he must have done so. And if he got out once, he could get out again.

At his evening meal he was preoccupied.

"Now, Matt dear, eat your ham," his wife adjured him. "It's already sliced. No carving to do. I'm afraid I wasn't very polite to Dr. Canfield, laughing at the way he carved that chicken."

"Eh? What?" said Kelton. "Oh, yes. He did rather bungle it, didn't he?"

He rose suddenly from the table. "Where are you going, Matt?" asked his wife.

"I must see Bannerman and Abernathy," said Kelton. "At once."

AN hour later, just as the moon was rising, three men stood in a small copse by the side of the turnpike.

"Wild goose chase," growled Bannerman.

"Take it easy, General," said Abernathy, in a low voice.

"I told you," said Kelton in barely audible tones, "that we must keep our mouths tight shut and our eyes wide open."

They waited there, in silence their eyes trained on the spot where the lane joined the main road. Long hours passed, and the moon rose higher. Then Abernathy's hand gripped Kelton's arm, and he said, close to Kelton's ear—

"Ssssh! Someone is coming down Red Coat Lane."

A man came down the lane, walking fast, and started down the turn-pike. He was a black blot on the moon-lit road. They had seen his cap, his clothes, his face were all black. Cautiously, at a distance, the three watchers followed him.

FOR more than a mile they were able to keep the man in black in sight; then, rounding a sharp bend, they lost him.

"He's left the road," said Bannerman.

"Quick, Squire, tell me," said Kelton, tensely. "Who lives around here?"

"Colonial house on right, Judge Harkness. Next place, two brothers named Leslie. Beyond that is my farm," said Abernathy. "And back there in the woods is a bungalow—"

"Whose?"

"Actress from New York has it for the Summer—named Lily Price—"

"Come," commanded Kelton. They followed him along the ragged woodroad that led to the bungalow. As they came toward it they heard a scream that was pinched off short. Kelton bounded into the bungalow, with the other men at his heels. By the brightness of the moon they saw the man in black bending over a figure in white. His hands gripped the woman's throat. Seeing them he sprang up, snarling, and hurled himself at them. Abernathy's big fist shot out, landed flush on the man's chin, and he crumpled to the floor. Kelton switched on the lights.

"Take the lady into the bedroom, General," he said. "She's fainted, but, thank heaven, she's not seriously hurt."

"Right," said Bannerman, and then, as he picked up the girl, "Jove, she's a beauty!"

"You brought rope, Squire," said Kelton.

"Yes."

"Then tie up that man before he comes to."

Abernathy bound the man in black hand and foot.

"It's Fenwick, of course," he said.

"Yes," said Kelton, "It's Gabriel Fenwick."

"How did he get out?" asked Abernathy.

"He didn't," said Kelton. "He was never in. Look closer, Squire."

Abernathy bent over the unconscious man.

"But—Kelton," he cried, "this is Dr. Canfield!"

"No," said Matthew Kelton, "the real Dr. Canfield is locked up in that old house on Battle Hill, as sane as he ever was. We'll crash through those steel walls and set him free as soon as he comes out of his drugged sleep."

Bannerman joined them.

"Miss Price is all right," he said. "She's quite calm now. A brave little woman—"

"You see," explained Kelton, while they were waiting for the police," the story we know about Fenwick and Canfield was accurate—up to a certain point. Canfield did bring Fenwick to this out-of-the-way place to take care of him; but Fenwick with the craftiness of his kind, managed, somehow, to reverse the roles, and the patient became the physician, the captor became the captive . . ."

"But what first gave you the idea that the man we knew as Canfield was not the doctor?" asked General Bannerman.

"Just a little mistake he made at lunch," said Matthew Kelton. "Did you ever see a surgeon who couldn't carve?"

THE DUCHESS SPOTS A KILLER

(*Continued from page* 24)

building, Spike said, "well, how about it?"

I thought for a minute. "The son's alibi was too damned pat."

"Did that strike you, too?" Spike asked quickly.

"It struck me right between the eyes. How about you?'

"It practically knocked me for a loop. Soon as he began to beef about three of the most prominent men in the city, I tumbled."

I took Katie's arm as we started to cross the street to the City Hall. She didn't exactly pull away from me, but she kept her distance.

"Are you two nitwits suggesting," she asked witheringly, "that that little man killed his father?"

Spike slapped her on the back, not gently. "Nice work, Duchess. How'd you ever tumble? I tell you, kid. You string along with us and you'll be a reporter some day."

"Some day!" she retorted. "String along with you and I'll get scooped every day."

"You know all the by-God answers, don't you?" Spike jeered.

"Most of them," Katie flashed. "But seriously. You don't really think Rosenblatt killed his father, do you? Good heavens, what was his motive?"

"A fortune in ice."

"Nonsense!" the Duchess snapped. "The old man must have been close to seventy. Why kill him? The son was bound to come into the diamonds before long anyway."

"Are you quite sure of that, Duchess? Perhaps the old guy had cut the son out of his will."

"All right, all right," Katie said wearily. "Have it your way. You usually do and you're usually wrong."

We went into the press room and found Jake Morris still at the desk, riffling the cards. Spike and Katie hit their telephones with a flash and I sat down across from Jake.

"Dead?" Jake asked.

"Like a mackerel."

"Good."

I glanced at him. His fat, slightly greasy face had the greenish-yellow tinge of a parsnip. And I thought: A reporter's life isn't all gin and ginger ale when we have to associate with worms like Jake Morris.

"Friend of yours, huh?" I said.

"We was pardners in the diamond racket for fifteen years."

"Sure. I remember now. You pulled out three or four years ago and started writing bail bonds. Tell me, Jake. How many times did you have to hit him?"

"To kill him, you mean?"

"Yes."

Jake chuckled in that offensive way he has, as though something were lodged in his throat. "Oh, eight or ten times, I guess." He put the cards down. "Tell me about it."

I told him the story briefly and asked: "What do you think of his son?"

"Newman? A shyster and a rat."

"Think he may have had a hand in it?"

"Me, I wouldn't be surprised if he had both feet in it. He'd cut his grandmother's throat for four bits, that guy."

"He has an alibi."

"Sure. So did Hauptmann."

KATIE and Spike joined us after a while and we sat around talking over the murder. Willie Blake came in finally with word that Frank Leopold was in the dicks' office. The jeweler swore he had made no appointment with Rosenblatt.

"He has four clerks in his establishment," Willie told us, "and he says they'll all testify he was in the store at three o'clock. He's clear, I guess. Somebody evidently used his name to make an appointment, not knowing he and Rosenblatt were at outs."

Pete Zerker came in a few minutes later. "Newman Rosenblatt is getting an order to open his old man's safety deposit box. Newman says the loss may run better than a hundred thousand dollars."

And that was that—for a while.

"COME on, Spike," I suggested. "Let's go out and get a load of Java. You have plenty of time before the first run."

We crossed the street to Joe's lunch room and went inside. There was a fellow sitting at the counter with a cup of coffee in one hand and a wedge of pie in the other. He wore a beautiful mauve-gray camel's-hair overcoat.

"Well!" Spike bellowed abruptly. "My friend, the burglar."

The fellow looked up. "Hello, pal," he said cheerfully. "How's the newspaper racket?"

"Great—pal," Spike retorted. "How's the prowl racket?"

"Not so bad, not so bad."

"Nice coat you picked up there."

"Yeah," Dopey McClain agreed, squirming. "Quite a coat, pal."

"Take it off!"

"Huh?"

"I said, take it off."

"You ain't goin' to snag the coat off a poor guy's back, are you," Dopey pleaded.

"Watch me!"

Spike reached for him.

"Wait! Wait" Dopey dropped his coffee and pie and reached for his pockets. "Got a few knick-knacks. Cigarettes, one thing 'n another."

"My cigarettes" Spike snorted.

He caught hold of the coat's lapels and peeled the garment neatly off Dopey's back. He climbed into it, shrugged the padded shoulders into place and sat down on a stool two removed from the burglar.

"And I thought you was my pal," Dopey moaned.

"Yeah? Maybe I thought the same about you. So what?"

Dopey shrugged, grinned. "The chow's on me, boys. Eat up."

Well, the burglar paid for our coffee, and we told him to keep out of jail and strolled back to the press room.

Pete Zerker and Willie Blake, the afternoon paper men, had seen their sheet to bed and gone home. Katie was alone and she looked pretty white. I think she was having a hard time forgetting Al Rosenblatt's bashed and bloody head.

"Look, Spike," I said. "You got a bottle of whiskey in your locker. Give the child a shot."

"Whiskey for this infant? Mother's milk is more in her line."

I went over to Spike's locker and brought the Duchess a drink. She accepted it wordlessly. For an instant her fine blue eyes met mine and I felt my heart flutter as it had of late whenever she looked at me. Then she downed her drink and said:

"Thanks—darling."

And I said, "You're not any too damned welcome—dear!"

And I hated her again, and wished she'd go back where she belonged, to reporting golden weddings and births of triplets.

I turned away and saw Spike standing in the center of the room, his hands thrust in the pockets of his overcoat, a look of shocked surprise on his homely face.

"Spill it, guy," I ordered.

He slowly withdrew his right hand from his pocket. He opened it and stared at a neat gold watch. I laughed.

"Your dinger is also a pickpocket. Quite an accomplished young man."

"But not much of a crap shooter," Katie said.

"Now what?" asked Spike. "If I turn it in and tell where I got it, it means the Big House for my pal, the burglar. On the other hand, if I keep it and somebody recognizes it——"

"Whoever lost it will beef to the cops," I pointed out. "Watch the reports and mail it back anonymously to the owner. How's that?"

Spike sighed. "Oh, that's oke, I guess," he said sadly. "But it's a hell of a swell watch."

Katie had stiffened a little. "May I see it?" she asked.

She took the ticker and held it out in the palm of her hand. It was a beautiful hand, with slender, tapering fingers. I was much more interested in it than in the watch. I saw her turn the latter over and look at the engraving on the back. Even then I didn't tumble, for it was perhaps the first time I'd ever noticed how lovely Katie's hands are.

The Duchess returned the ticker and stood looking from Spike to me. Her lips curled with a fine contempt.

"Just a pair of bright reporters," she said scathingly. "You'll go a long way, you two—in the wrong direction."

"All right, Duchess!" Spike snapped. "Commence!"

"Look at the watch."

"I've looked at it. I think it's a swell watch. What's the add? Kick in, Duchess?"

"Look at it again."

"You want me to get eye-strain? Spill it, kid!"

"Hasn't it occurred to you," Katie retorted contemptously, "that that watch is a twin of the one Pete Moran took out of old Mr. Rosenblatt's vest pocket?"

Spike looked at the watch, shrugging. "And so?" he sneered. "Must I get into a lather over it? Sister, aren't you bright enough to know that there are probably a thousand tickers just like this scattered over the city?"

Katie asked, heavily sarcastic: "With the initials A.Z.R. engraved in block letters on the case?"

"Huh?" Spike gulped. "Whazat?"

I gulped myself as I tore the watch out of Spike's fingers and stared at it.

"My God, Katie, you're right!"

"Thank you. Had you suspected I didn't know my alphabet?"

Spike sat down weakly, as though some one had stuck a pin in him and let out all his air. I sat down too, feeling suddenly faint. Only Katie remained placid, looking from Spike to me, smiling her cool and imperturbable smile. After several minutes Spike said feebly:

"Duchess, you better tell us. We haven't got brains enough to figure it out for ourselves. Shoot, kid!"

The Duchess bowed. Was she enjoying herself at our expense, or was she?

"Stop me whenever you think I'm wrong," she said quietly. "That watch belonged to Mr. Rosenblatt and was in his pocket when he was murdered. Right?"

"So right, Duchess, I'm nauseated to think how dumb I am," Spike said sadly.

"The watch which Pete Moran found in the murdered man's vest pocket was prepared by the murderer, set at 3:01, and the back caved in and the watch stopped at that hour. Correct?"

"Yes, Duchess." My voice was humble and I didn't care.

"The reason?" Katie went on. "To fix the time of death later than the actual crime. Why? So the murderer could get away and establish an alibi. And the reason for the two watches? The killer wanted to waste no time in re-setting the old man's watch and stopping it. Then too, if he had tried to jam the case at the scene of the crime he might have broken the crystal, dropped pieces of it on the floor which he would've had to gather up and put in the vest pocket. So—he prepared the other watch first, taking no chances. He struck the old man down, beat the life out of him, changed the watches and got out of there in a hurry."

Spike nodded slowly. "And my pal,

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THE DUCHESS SPOTS A KILLER

(*Continued from page 79*)

the burglar, bumped into this guy on the street, before he had a chance to get rid of the watch, and hoisted it off him."

"Or," Katie said quickly, "your pal, the burglar, is the murderer of Al Rosenblatt."

"Huh?" Spike gulped. "Naw. He's a pretty good egg, that burglar. He wouldn't kill anybody."

"Besides," I said, "the times are wrong. What time did Jake say the burglar was released? Around 2:45, wasn't it?"

"Yeah."

"Well, that let's him out," I said. "If he'd pulled the job, he'd have stopped that other watch before 2:45. So he's in the clear."

Spike sighed his relief. I think he really liked that burglar; Spike always was one to admire a man with nerve.

"He isn't in the clear," Katie promptly contradicted. "Check up and you'll probably find he has an iron-clad alibi. Without a doubt he was in the office of his lawyer at three o'clock and has his lawyer and the lawyer's eight partners to swear to it."

"Wait a minute! Wait—a—minute!" I exclaimed. "Do you suppose, by any chance, your burglar's lawyer is—"

"Newman Rosenblatt!" Spike cried.

The shock of that possibility stopped us for a minute. Katie—and you have to admire her calm—was the first to speak.

"Let's stop supposing for a minute or two. Let's put our feet on the ground and get back to facts."

"Such as?" Spike asked.

"Whoever conceived this crime knew the make, the model, the initials and the type of engraving on Rosenblatt's watch. Furthermore, whoever actually pulled the job must have been a diamond buyer and must have been known by Rosenblatt. Otherwise the old man would never have opened his safe."

"That's an angle," Spike cried happily. "My burglar, by no stretch of the imagination, could ever have been a diamond buyer. He's been a burglar all his life, with maybe an occasional flier at pocket-picking."

"That's logical," I agreed. "Rosenblatt would never have opened his safe for Dopey, so we've got to come back to our original supposition. Dopey lifted the watch off the killer who, we agree, must have been known to Rosenblatt and must have been familiar with Rosenblatt's watch. And that person is—"

"Frank Leopold!" Spike and the Duchess cried in unison.

"It's a good bet," I nodded. "I happen to know that Leopold is on his last legs financially. We carried a story the other day that some of his creditors had filed an action in bankruptcy. Furthermore, we know that Rosenblatt and Leopold had trouble a couple of years ago. There's an additional motive."

"What more do we want?" Spike said.

"Oh, not much. Just enough evidence to send him to the gallows."

Katie asked: "Isn't that Captain Wallis's job? When we tell him about this watch—"

"Listen, Duchess!" Spike snorted. "Who the hell does this watch belong to?"

"It belongs, unquestionably, to the estate of Al Rosenblatt."

"Wrong as usual! It belongs, infant, to the estate of Spike Kaylor, not yet deceased. And as long as it belongs to me the police aren't going to hear anything about it. Do you gather that, Duchess, or shall I draw a diagram?"

"You're going to run it down alone?"

"You're getting positively brilliant in your deductions," Spike applauded. "We're going to run it down alone because if we gave it to Wallis he'd probably break the story for the afternoon papers—after we did all the brain work."

"We?" the Duchess asked.

"Well, I'll admit you spotted the ticker in the first place. And for that minor assistance we'll keep you in the corporation."

"Thanks. And where do we go from here?"

My partner in crime looked dubious, but I said quickly: "We send Spike to the dicks' bureau to get the number of the other watch. We wire the number to the manufacturer and find out what jeweler bought the ticker in the first place. Then we go to him and find out who he sold it to. And then—"

"We put the finger on the killer of Al Rosenblatt," Spike put in triumphantly. "Oke, Pinky?"

"Correct. How's it sound, Duchess? Simple, huh?"

"It sounds," Katie said thoughtfully, "too damned simple."

Well, it did sound that way. But the more we talked it over the more we convinced ourselves we were on the right track. Some one known to Rosenblatt bought that watch, had it engraved to match the diamond merchant's, killed the old man and planted it in his vest pocket. And then, before the killer got rid of the ticker he'd taken from Rosenblatt, Dopey McClain bumped into him on a crowded street and hoisted it.

There it was, take it or leave it. We decided to take it. We decided we were a cinch for a beautiful news beat. And we couldn't help wondering, during the following twenty-two hours, who we'd eventually put the finger on. Frank Leopold? Newman Rosenblatt? Or possibly Dopey McClain?

THE following day was a long one, because we didn't get an answer to our telegram until four in the afternoon. And when it came, and Katie and Spike and I went into a huddle down the corridor, it was pretty disappointing. It read:

"*Watch sold Catalina Jewelry Company Los Angeles California.*"

And Los Angeles was five hundred miles away!

"This," Spike groaned, "is getting more tougher fast."

"We could wire the Catalina Jewelry Company and find out—" Katie checked herself. "No," she said after a moment, "that wouldn't work. The man who bought it gave an assumed name with the initials A.Z.R. And it's ten to one the clerk in a big establishment wouldn't remember him. Boys, I'm afraid we're sunk."

"Sunk, hell!" Spike rejoined. "It'll take more'n a knock-down like this to stop us. Go back in your corner and sniff ammonia."

"It's becoming apparent, too," I remarked, "that we're dealing with a pretty smart egg. He didn't risk buying the watch here. The jeweler might remember engraving those initials, or the watch might be traced. So he goes down to L. A. and buys it from the biggest store in the city. Yes, Spike, this is getting more tougher fast."

"But we aren't sunk. Damned if we're sunk!" Spike cried. "Only—uh—"

"Yes, yes. Go on."

"You go on, Pink."

I didn't know which way to go. "Suppose we pass the buck to Katie. How about it, Duchess?"

"I say take the watch to Captain Wallis and let him—"

"And I say nuts!" Spike snapped. "Look here! We got one card left, and maybe it's an ace in the hole. My pal, the burglar."

"Dopey? What could he do?"

"Now listen! It's an eight to five shot that Frank Leopold pulled the job. We'll get his picture—he uses a cut of his homely map in every ad he runs—and see if Dopey can identify him as the guy whose watch he hoisted. How's that?"

"It's lousy," I said.

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THE DUCHESS SPOTS A KILLER

Katie asked: "Do you think this burglar would be screwy enough to admit he hoisted a watch?"

"Well," Spike said reflectively, "he's pretty screwy."

"But hardly that screwy," I said.

"Well, you can't rule out a guy for trying. Let's get hold of Dopey and turn on the heat."

"How'll you get hold of him?"

"Jake Morris."

"Yeah? You didn't get to first base when you tried that yesterday."

"We'll get to first base today. We'll turn the heat on Jake."

"You think you can?"

"Listen, lug! I got enough on that chiseler to put him away for twenty years. He knows it, too. Remember the Phelps case?"

Yes, I remembered the Phelps case, and I knew Jake had been mixed up in it. But I doubted if Spike had anything on him. However, Jake was plenty yellow; he bluffed easily and perhaps Spike could slip over a fast one on him. It was our only bet, anyway.

"All right," I said. "Let's go over and put the bee on Jake. Duchess, you stay here. This may get rough."

"The rougher the better," Katie said promptly.

"You still don't trust us, huh?"

"Just as far, darling, as I can see you. Let's go."

We clipped a picture of Frank Leopold from an ad he'd run in Sunday's paper and ankled over to Jake's office, which was on the fourth floor of a building across the street from the Hall. The big bail bond broker was alone, his feet on his desk, a cigar in his mouth, when we walked in without the ceremony of knocking. He looked surprised and not too happy to see us.

"Hello, boys—and Miss Blayne. What you want?"

"Dopey McClain," Spike told him.

"What you want with Dopey? Ain't you got that overcoat yet? Well, if you ain't, it's your own fault. You should never shoot crap in a jail, Spike, and you should never trust a burglar."

"I got the overcoat, Jake. We want to see Dopey on another matter."

Jake grunted. "Sure. I know. You got somethin' up your sleeve, all right, else why the delegation? And when you get through with Dopey, he'll maybe get cold dogs and skip his bail. Yeah. An' won't that be nice on me. Yeah."

"Where you got him filed away?" Spike demanded.

Jake shrugged, said heavily: "I ain't puttin' out nothin'."

"Oh, no?" Spike was getting mean, and when Spike gets mean he makes an angry police dog look like a sick Pekingese. "All right, big boy. If you don't put out, I put out. And when I put out anything it'll be about Bill Phelps and that paving contract." Spike paused a moment to let that sink in. "Take it or leave it, you cheap yellow-faced, yellow-livered crook."

When you consider that Jake Morris would make two of Spike Kaylor, they were harsh words. But Jake, all at once, didn't look so big. He didn't like the reference to Bill Phelps and the paving contract. He didn't like it even a little bit.

"Can't you tell me what you want with Dopey?" he asked. "Maybe I—"

"Maybe you can go open an oyster! Where you got Dopey holed up?"

Jake took a deep breath. "You want I should call him up here?"

"You're certainly getting good at riddles, Jake. You got the answer right away."

Sighing heavily, Jake took up the telephone and called a number. He asked for McClain, got him and told him to come to his office at once. The rest of us sighed too, with relief, and sat down. We were over the first hump.

Dopey McClain showed in about ten minutes. He came in whistling cheerfully. His song died when he saw Spike.

"Well! My pal. How are you, pal? How's the newspaper racket?"

"Take a chair, Dopey."

"Sure, pal," Dopey said pleasantly. "Where'll I take it?"

"Cut it, guy! Save your comedy for the courtroom. Where'd you get that watch?"

"Watch?" Dopey sat down, not happily.

"Ticker to you, Dopey. Where'd you hoist it?"

"So help me, pal, I don't know the beef."

"You'll know it, Dopey, if I turn you in to the cops," Spike said significantly. "Haven't you been told it's a felony in this state to pick pockets?"

Dopey tried to square his shoulders as he indignantly retorted: "Pal, I'm a burglar. I ain't no dip."

"Says you!"

Spike whipped the watch out of his pocket, hopped across the room, held it in front of Dopey's face.

"Ever see this before?"

"No. I never seen it before," Dopey vowed.

"And I suppose you'll deny, when we get you on the witness stand, that it wasn't in the pocket of that overcoat I stripped off you last night?"

"If it was in there, pal. I don't know how it got there."

Spike put the watch away and took out the picture of Frank Leopold. "Ever see this guy before?" he demanded?"

Dopey scanned the picture. He tweaked his long nose, scratched his head. "Well, maybe yes, maybe no. He does look kind of familiar."

"Is this the guy you hoisted the watch from?" Spike cried.

I held my breath. If Dopey said yes, well—we were plenty hot on the trail. But Dopey must have had training as a congressman. He couldn't bring himself to say either yes or no. He hemmed and hawed for a minute or two, while Spike and I sweat, and Katie perspired.

Then he pleaded: "Listen, pal! Gimme the lay, will you? You can't expect me to admit—"

"Dopey, get this!" Spike ordered ominously. "You're on the spot, guy, and it's a plenty tough spot. Prowling houses and picking pockets is one thing. Murder, Dopey, murder—is something else again. The guy you stole this watch from killed that old diamond merchant, Rosenblatt. You probably saw it in the papers."

Dopey gulped. He tweaked his nose furiously and the sweat began to roll down his pale cheeks.

"Unless," Spike barked, "you killed him!"

SPIKE waited a moment. The room was so tense something had to snap. And it was Dopey who snapped. Shaking like a leaf in a wind, he rasped: "I never killed nobody! I swear I never, Spike! I hoisted that ticker off Jake Morris while we was standing in the desk sergeant's office!"

Well, it knocked the wind out of us. Spike, because he was standing, looked harder hit than anybody else. He was limp, all at once, as he swung around toward Jake Morris.

Jake's yellow teeth were clamped over his cigar. He was gripping the corner of his desk with one soiled paw. The other was thrust deep in his pocket. His face was green and his small ice-blue eyes glared viciously at Dopey.

And all at once I knew that Dopey had told the truth. I stood up.

"You should have ditched that watch sooner, Jake," I said quietly. "Though of course you thought you were safe. You had a neat alibi, very neat. At three o'clock you were in the press room, and you had all of us fellows to back you up. You

(*Please turn to page* 82)

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THE DUCHESS SPOTS A KILLER

(*Continued from page* 81)

figured you'd pulled the perfect job. And it would have been perfect, I guess, if you'd known that Dopey was a dip as well as a dinger. Did I hear you tell Spike, a minute ago, never to trust a burglar?"

"Pinky, you're nuts," Jake said unsteadily. "Me, I don't know what you're talkin' about."

"Like hell you don't! I suppose you went to Los Angeles two weeks ago to see the races."

"Sure I did."

"And I suppose you didn't buy a watch from the Catalina Jewelry Company? And have it engraved with the initials A.Z.R.? No, no, not you. It was a couple of other guys. It's too bad, Jake, you didn't have brains enough to file the number off that watch. But then I guess you were afraid to do that—it would have looked too suspicious. Anyway, Jake, the salesman who sold it to you is on his way up here to identify you. And you're going to have one hell of a lot of explaining to do to Captain Wells. Now do you want to come over with us and start in on it?"

WELL, I never thought he'd do it. I never thought he had the guts. But all at once there it was—a big .45 automatic in Jake's shaking hand.

I took a step backward, and so did Spike. I didn't like it, not any. A frightened man is liable to do most anything, if he's scared badly enough. And Jake Morris was scared.

Scared, but not so dumb. He was thinking just as fast as we were, and maybe a shade faster. Without a word, without any other threat than the waving .45, he reached back with his left hand and found the telephone. He took a couple of steps toward us—and we took a couple of steps backward—and then he yanked the phone out by the roots.

"I oughta kill you," Jake rasped, "only it'd make too much noise. You guys are gonna stay here—locked in, see? And I'm lamming. By the time you get outta here I'll be in the clear"—and he added leering at us—"with a hundred grand in ice."

I got a glimpse of Katie out of the corner of my eye. She hadn't moved from her chair. I could see her face was dead white and I knew she was frightened. I was sorry, now, I'd let her come. Because—well, I had a hunch Spike wasn't going to take this lying down and I knew damned well I wasn't.

I managed, without being too obvious, to give Spike one quick look. I knew he'd get it. We'd worked together before. I knew that when the time came, he'd be right there with me and he'd be there low.

Jake backed toward the door. He was facing us; Katie was out of his line of vision.

"Do you want our hands up, Jake?" I asked cheerfully.

"You keep your hands where they are."

"All right, Jake. Just so you don't get nervous with that rod." I glanced at Katie, dropped my jaw, gasped: "Katie! For God's sake!"

Well, it was old stuff but show me the man who, under the circumstances, wouldn't shift his eyes an instant. And that instant was all we needed.

Spike went in low. His driving shoulder buried itself a foot deep in Jake's belly just as I made a wild leap, knocked the rod aside with my left hand and risked everything on finding Jake's button with my right. I was lucky; I had to be lucky.

The .45 went off with a roar like a twelve-inch howitzer. Pain, like a red-hot knife, shot through my fist and up my arm to the shoulder. It wasn't the bullet. It was the shock of connecting with Jake's jaw.

The big broker went down with a crash, and Spike and I landed on top of him. He was out but we took no chances. While I hastily collared the automatic, Spike gave him these and those. And when Spike finished and we stumbled to our feet. Jake Morris was slumbering peacefully but not prettily.

We both turned to Katie. She hadn't moved and her face was puttywhite. But she smiled and managed in a quavering voice that was not at all like her own:

"You—you scared the hell out of me, you two."

"Huh!" Dopey McClain grunted. "If you was scared—what do you think I was? Holy cats! Never again do I hoist a ticker—not even from my best friend."

In no time at all we got the dicks over, gave them a tabloid version of the story and streaked for the press room. It was then eight minutes of six and we had just eight minutes to make our first edititions. As Katie, still putty-white, started toward a phone booth she faltered. She caught hold of a chair and eased into it. She looked green around the gills and terribly frightened.

"Pinky!" she whispered. "I'm—going—to faint."

Which she proceeded to do forthwith.

We picked her up and laid her out on a desk and looked at each other.

"The excitement," Spike grinned, "was too much for Katie. Well, she'll snap out of it. In the meantime—I got about five minutes to make the bulldog with our story."

"What about the *Sun?*"

Spike glanced at the Duchess, shrugged. "To hell with the *Sun!* And to hell with the Lady and Katie! Maybe this'll teach 'em a police beat is no place for a dame. Guys, now—we don't faint. If Katie doesn't come to in time to make her first edition with the story—well, that's just too bad. She can make her second."

I decided I could be just as hard-boiled as Spike.

"Oke!" I said. "To hell with the *Sun*, and the Lady, and Katie!"

Spike went into a booth and closed the door. I got some water and threw it on the Duchess and opened the collar of her blouse.

It was certainly a rotten break for the kid. Here she'd seen it through right up to the end—and then had to go pull a stunt like this. I looked over my shoulder at Spike. I could see him, through the glass door, talking a mile a minute. I glanced back at Katie. . . . Oh, to hell with Spike!

I leaped into a booth and called the *Sun* and asked for the desk. The Lady came on with a terse:

"City desk! Commence!"

"This is Pinky Kane, Miss Tobin. I want to give you the end of that Rosenblatt story. Jake Morris, the bail bond broker and one-time partner of Rosenblatt, has been—"

"Moses on a bicycle," the Lady bellowed. "What is this, Kane? Be Kind to Animals Week? Spike Taylor just gave me the story."

Well, we came out of our respective booths, Spike and I, at the same instance. We met each others' eyes, and Spike looked plenty sheepish and I know I looked the same. Spike said tentatively:

"Oh, well. She's a pretty swell little kid, anyway."

Katie, blinking, was sitting up on the desk. "Who—who are you talking about?" she asked dazedly.

"Not you, yuh mugg!" Spike retorted furiously. "Go back to sleep!"

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I GO SLEUTHING

(*Continued from page 67*)

he returned from fishing he let himself in the jail, laid down on his bare wooden bunk and went to sleep.

Thereafter he carried the keys more often than the jailer. His daytime hours were his own. He left and returned when he pleased. Sometimes he would drop in at the village store for plug. If he chose to stick around and croon with the barber shop quartet, he did. Occasionally, when sleeplessness beset him, he would leave his cell and go for a walk along the moon-lit mountain ranges which reared in ghostly majesty all about him. Communing thus with nature as he knew it best, he found the peace that the barren cell did not afford. Many times when the jailer arrived in the morning with his breakfast, Beale would greet him from the jailhouse steps where he had "set all night, chawin' and ruminatin'."

On November 11, 1927, the supreme court affirmed Beale's conviction and he was ordered to appear for sentencing before the next term in Mingo County Court. Beale made the trip to court unescorted and spent the night before his appearance in court in a Williamson hotel alone.

Judge R. D. Bailey granted Beale a commutation of sentence to life imprisonment when Beale was arraigned. The state counsel protested, holding that the governor alone had pardoning power and Judge Bailey was directed to re-impose the death sentence and fix the execution date; but the jurist, convinced of the prisoner's innocence, refused to carry out the mandate, doffed his robes and gave up his bench.

Judge Raymond Maxwell of a neighboring district was called to preside in Bailey's place. He re-imposed the death sentence and Beale, *alone and unguarded*, went to the state penitentiary where he presented himself as a tenant of death row.

On May 9, 1929, Beale, who had resigned himself to death and was steeling himself to mount the gallows, a "martyr to the blindness of West Virginia justice," received a commutation of sentence to life from Governor William G. Conley.

On February 28, 1933, Governor Conley, defeated for re-election, issued a full pardon for Beale as one of his last official acts, stating that "after a most thorough study of this case, I am convinced that the subject is innocent."

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That's why I depend so much upon the food pamphlets I get from Tower Magazines. How Tom loved that fresh ham steak baked with pears! Then I followed that with Southern Sweet Potato Pie which was really delicious. Both recipes I got out of "American Cooking"—and there are 60 other recipes in that pamphlet every bit as good.

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Rita Calhoun
TOWER MAGAZINES, Inc.
55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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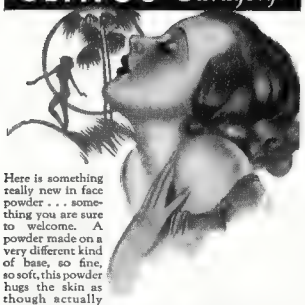

Here is something really new in face powder . . . something you are sure to welcome. A powder made on a very different kind of base, so fine, so soft, this powder hugs the skin as though actually a part of it. Try it. See for yourself, if ever you knew a powder to stay on so long . . . and smooth all the while it stays. There's *another* thrill in it too! The fineness that lets Savage cling so endlessly, also makes the skin appear more truly poreless, smoother, more inviting to the eyes. And the thrill that there is in touching a Savage powdered skin could be told you only by *someone else!* There are four lovely shades:

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Rapid Dry CURLER

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AT 5c and 10c STORES
and at NOTION COUNTERS
5¢

WHO AM I?

(*Continued from page* 17)

showed class, though in need of cleaning and pressing—and he was handed a menu without objection.

"Small sirloin—French fried—limas—coffee—apple pie," ordered the unusual customer. "And double the potatoes and pie. Quick as you can, please!"

His voice was cultured, deep and soft, and the waiter was still more assured that the man was as good for the check. Besides, he had observed that there was a thin gold watch-chain across the customer's vest.

When the food was put before him the man began to wolf it as if he had been starved for a week. The waiter frowned and shook his head. Suddenly the voracious diner realized he was in a public place, and his good manners asserted themselves.

Finishing his second piece of pie, he poured a second cup of coffee, and the thought flashed on him?

"Where did I eat last?"

He couldn't remember. Over the second cup of coffee, he tried to put together the jumbled puzzle of his mind. Things of ordinary purpose, the necessities of everyday life, were clear. He knew that he would have to pay for this satisfying meal, that he would buy a newspaper afterwards, and a movie and bed were in order; that there were men and women to know, to love, to dislike; that everybody had a name, a place in the world, and a home of some sort.

Except himself! For the most important pieces in that jumbled puzzle of his mind were missing—his name, his residence, his business, his people. If the hovering waiter had known what was going on in that agonized head he would not have misunderstood the next move of the customer.

For, in a sudden panic, the man without an identity began a violent search of his pockets. He was looking for letters or papers, or any sort of memoranda that would help him find out who he was; but the waiter was sure it was the old bluff of looking for money that had never been there.

"Anything I can do for you, sir?" he asked, and insinuated the bill under the man's nose.

In digging into his otherwise empty pockets, the suspected customer came upon several crumpled greenbacks and some silver—almost five dollars. On this pleasant discovery the waiter fawned. The bill was paid, but the man who paid it sat as if glued to the chair. He was frightened to realize that there was not a scrap of paper on him to indicate one little fact as to whether he was Tom, Dick or Harry, Smith, Jones or Brown; whether he lived in this city of the big railroad terminal or elsewhere; what his occupation was.

"Who am I? Who *am* I?" he repeated soundlessly.

No one who has not experienced that mysterious vacuum of the mind called amnesia can appreciate the tragic helplessness that engulfs the victim. Physically and mentally it is like being in mid-ocean in a rowboat without oars.

Mechanically, this lost man's hand went to his watch-pocket to ascertain the time and he drew forth a lady's watch with an old-fashioned double case. It startled him. Instinctively, he knew that it was, together with the thin delicate chain, a feminine article of wear, and it set him to thinking of women. So far as he could recall, there were no women in his life.

Engraving on the back of the watch caught his eye.

"Cora," it read.

But who was Cora? That name meant absolutely nothing to him. He said it over a dozen times to no effect. Then he examined a rather large shield-shaped medallion of copper, enamelled on one side, which was attached to the other end of the thin chain. There was a good-sized letter "R" set in the enamel.

A gleam of hope penetrated his mental darkness.

"Does my name begin with an 'R'?" he asked himself.

He tried to concentrate. It was no use. But he did think of something. Acting on the impulse, he rushed out of the restaurant and made his way to a telephone booth where he began thumbing through a book to find the "R's".

Unsteadily, his finger went down the list of names, and his lips mumbled them over:

"Raah . . . Raash . . . Raatz . . . Rab . . ." and right on through to "Ryttenberg."

More than fifty pages of small-print names under "R", but not one of them struck a chord of recognition in his memory. Wearily, after nearly two hours of this close scanning and whispering to himself, which again brought him under the surveillance of the station attendants and travelers, he decided to go outdoors into the streets. Fresh air might clear his head, and the big city itself might offer him a clue to his name or place.

Out he went into the busy thoroughfare, only to be more bewildered than ever. The streets, the houses, everything was new to his eyes. He kept careful count of the blocks and turns he took in his walk so as not to lose the railroad terminal, for in his plight that was the only home he knew!

In fact, he determined to spend the night there. The cost of that dinner had made a big hole in his funds, and he couldn't afford a hotel room. Therefore, he searched out a retired spot in the railroad waiting-room and went to sleep—porter or no porter.

HIS slumber was undisturbed. At daylight, he awoke with the renewed bustle of the place. Now, he became aware of how sticky and dirty he was. Repairing to a coin-booth lavatory, he managed to achieve a bath with a wet towel while his clothes were spread about for an airing.

Dressing, he felt much better. But he was hungry again. He took out his money and counted it: $2.30. Though he knew he had to hoard each nickel, he was sure he ought to eat, get a shave and a clean collar. His breakfast was simple but filling. After buying a collar he made for the barber-shop.

After the shave and the putting on of a clean collar the man felt his self-respect and morale come back, and he spent the rest of the morning trying to "find" himself. But reading newspapers, signs, placards, combing the streets, taking a subway ride, talking to anyone who would talk to him, shed no light on his problem. At last he returned again to the railroad station and approached a police officer detailed there.

"I'm in trouble," he said, "and I want you to help me."

"Sure, what is it?" replied the patrolman, who was well-used to questions and requests of all kinds.

"You see, officer, I don't know who I am, or where I came from, and I am getting desperate."

The policeman reached the obvious conclusion that this fellow was drunk.

"Come on, old man," he said, "I'll steer you out to the street and then you'll know where you are and how to get home, and after a good sleep you'll remember who you are."

"Officer, I know you think I'm intoxicated," said the man, "but I am as sober as you are. I just don't know who I am, nor what happened to me in all the years of my life up to the time I came to in this station last night! You must help me!"

The policeman said to himself: "Here's a nut!" Aloud, he said: "All right, come with me."

And he led the man of lost memory to the physician in charge of the Pennsylvania Railroad's medical service. After the doctor had listened

Dress Up
your kitchen

Photograph courtesy of Lewis & Conger

7 diagram patterns for 15¢ bring beauty and charm to the kitchen

Just between us women, isn't a kitchen a much pleasanter place to be in when it boasts a few gay spots . . . new curtains, a pot of flowers, colored canisters! You'll enjoy making these attractive kitchen accessories below from diagram patterns, each one with complete directions.

CURTAIN PATTERN
To be made from scrim and checked gingham. With this are directions for making checked flower pot holders to match. Very decorative.

CROCHETED STOOL COVER
It's easy to make a crocheted stool cover and a matching floor mat from heavy white and colored cotton thread! Directions tell you how.

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Empty tin containers can be transformed into good-looking, serviceable canisters with the aid of waterproof paint and simple stencils.

LETTUCE BAGS
Unbleached muslin decorated with designs in colored cotton. Useful and good-looking.

TABLE PADS
No scarred tables when bone rings are made into table pads with a good-looking crocheted body.

OILCLOTH CASE
A necessary convenience for memo pads, pencils and sales slips. A clever "dummy" prize.

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You'll never be without a ball of twine in a handy place when you have this wall holder.

Send for these diagram patterns today . . . all seven for 15 cents

Frances Cowles

TOWER MAGAZINES, Inc.
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to his story and put him through an examination, he called up the Missing Persons Bureau and told me the details, which I have just related.

"Captain Ayers," he concluded, "I think he is the man you have been searching the country for these last few weeks."

THIS excited me, for the missing man in question was nationally prominent, had disappeared unaccountably, and the President of the United States himself was deeply concerned as to what had become of him. But the moment I laid eyes on the man in the doctor's care I knew it wasn't the President's friend for whom we were searching. This man was at least ten years younger—about forty-five.

I saw before me a chap of five feet eight, weighing in the neighborhood of a hundred and fifty pounds; his hair was light brown, beginning to thin at the temples; his eyes were blue; the face was an intellectual one, now wearing an anxious, worried expression.

Especially, I concentrated on his eyes, but I quickly realized that his gaze was direct and that there was no distension of the pupils usually found in the eyes of one whose sanity is unbalanced; but there was a light of fear and uncertainty in them that aroused one's pity.

To put him more at ease if possible, I drew my chair closer to him and placed my hand on his knee.

"Don't you worry too much, old man," I said confidently. "This blank you have drawn is only temporary, I'm sure. Other cases similar to yours have come to my attention and we have been able to clear up the mystery in each instance. Take it easy, if you can, and tell me all about it right from the start."

Employing the language of a cultured and well-educated gentleman, he repeated his story to me. When he came to the point of searching his pockets for identification data, I challenged him:

"How did you know that it was the custom of men to carry letters and the like in their coat pockets and that you might find out your name this way?"

I watched him closely. I had come across men before this who had faked amnesia, or a lost memory, because of some criminal action, or because they wanted to drop out of an environment that had grown distasteful. This fellow might be playing a deep game for very good reasons unknown to me. But the frank bewilderment of his face reassured me as he answered:

"I really don't know, Captain Ayers. It must have been instinct or habit. I can't give you reasons for any of the logical things I did since last night when I was wide-awake yet 'woke up' in a strange and terrifying world—I just did them almost as a robot might do them."

"Well, you weren't much of a robot to figure out that letter on your watch-charm and go through the 'R's' in the telephone book," I said. "That was real smart, old man!"

He was uncomfortable under my analysis, I could see.

"Captain Ayers," he said, helplessly, "I fully realize my queer condition. Apparently, I can reason, solve the problems of living as they come up, but I cannot remember anything about myself further back than last night. I know I've had a past and I feel it has been a busy one. I'm sure I've been accustomed to the comforts of life. I may have a wife—I don't know. I may have children—I don't know. I may have a business—I don't know. Think of not knowing your own name, Captain! What in the world am I to do?"

"Don't you attempt to do a single thing," I said. "Just leave it all to me and I'll get you from behind that dark curtain, and then we will have a good laugh together over your little vacation from yourself!"

He tried to smile but it was sadly forced.

At this point the railroad doctor informed us that his office hours were up, and he had outside duties to perform.

"It's your case, anyway, Captain," he said.

The man of lost identity and I adjourned to the quarters of the chief of the railroad police. Here we resumed our conversation, and I asked him if the lady's watch and chain and medallion were the only personal possessions he had on him.

"And this bunch of keys," he replied, passing them over.

I went over them one by one with him, trying to stir his recollection of their use, but only a small one that looked like an ignition-key to a car brought a look of puzzled recognition into his eyes.

"Do you drive an auto?" I asked.

"I don't know," he said, "but I have a feeling that if I were in a car I could operate it—maybe I couldn't, though."

"Too bad we haven't the license as well as the key, "I observed, "but then you'd have found yourself long ago." Then I added: "I wonder how long ago it is that you dropped out of your former life?"

He shook his head.

"I haven't the faintest idea," he said. "Have you?"

"No," I admitted, "I haven't. You see, you could have been living as another person for years before your so-called 'awakening' in the Pennsylvania waiting-room."

During the last ten minutes of talk I thought I had detected a slight New England accent in his cultured speech. On the chance of his possible connection with an institution of learning, I suddenly enquired:

"Ever hear of Harvard?"

"No," he said.

"Are you sure?" I demanded.

"Never heard the word before, that I know of, Captain," he answered in all sincerity.

Strangely enough, he instantly recognized the name of Yale and a half dozen other Eastern colleges that I mentioned, and gave me their correct locations.

Did not knowing Harvard have any significance? I wondered to myself. Why had it been blotted out of his memory?

While we chatted in the room of the chief of the railroad police, I noted that my vis-a-vis did not look me straight in the eye as he had in the doctor's office, but fixed his gaze at a point over my head. Finally, I turned to see what he was looking at. It was a shelf of books, mostly law books.

"Do you know any of them?" I enquired.

"I think so," he answered, and named one.

It was a well-known treatise on the law of contracts. I reached for it and opened it haphazardly. Pointing to the footnotes which were thick on the pages, and which were full of legal abbreviations, I asked:

"Can you translate and explain these terms?"

He did it fluently.

"What language are the abbreviations in?"

"Latin."

"Why?"

"Many of our legal words are in Latin."

"What does 'Connors v. Coleman' mean?"

"Connors versus Coleman."

"And 'versus' is what?"

"Latin for 'against'."

Having, as a young man, studied law myself, I entered a legal discussion with him, and his familiarity with law persuaded me that it must be his profession—and that was an important clue, indeed.

I was convinced he was a lawyer, a New Englander, and that the blank reaction to Harvard tied in some-

(*Please turn to page* 86)

Accentuate the alluring beauty of your eyes with graceful, well trained eyebrows. Scientifically designed, well-balanced, Wigder Tweezers make plucking a painless, pleasant duty and quickly banish bushy brows and "wild" hairs.
Wigder Tweezers and Manicure Aids are on sale at your local 5 and 10¢ store. Get yourself a set today.

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Reduces wrinkles and other age-signs. Simply dissolve one ounce Saxolite in half-pint witch hazel and use daily as face lotion.

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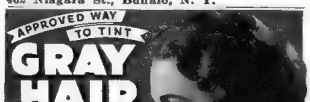

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Mail this Coupon to Box 102 THE STILLMAN CO., Aurora, Illinois and receive a Free Booklet about Freckles.

Name.....
Address.....

. . . Continued. . . .
The List of Stores Where You Can See Tower Star Fashions

Please see also page 88 for stores from Alabama to South Dakota. Pictures of Tower Star Fashions are on page 14.

TENNESSEE
Bristol—The H. P. King Co.
Chattanooga—Miller Bros.
Dyersburg—Style Shop
Harriman—Dress Shop
Jackson—The Francis Shop
Knoxville—Miller's, Inc.
Memphis—J. Goldsmith & Sons Co.
Nashville—Rich, Schwartz & Joseph
Morristown—J. W. Arnold
Paris—Hunt Bros. (Hollywood Dept.)
Union City—Hunt Bros. (Hollywood Dept.)

TEXAS
Abilene—Campbell's
Amarillo—Hollywood Dress Shop
Athens—Mandelstein's
Austin—Goodfriends
Bay City—The Hurley Shoppe
Beaumont—Worth's, Inc.
Beeville—The Parisian
Brady—Benham Style Shop
Breckenridge—The Belots Shop
Brownwood—Garner-Alvis Co.
Cameron—Lyon D. G. Co.
Cisco—J. H. Garner's
Corpus Christi—Smart Shop
Denison—Richie-Freels
Denton—H. M. Russell & Sons
El Paso—The White House
Gainesville—Teaque Co.
Greenville—R. E. King
Houston—Hutton, Inc.
Kingsville—J. B. Ragland'Merc. Co.
Laredo—A. C. Richter, Inc.
Lubbock—Freed's Women's Apparels
Lulling—O'Neill's
McAllen—The Fashion
Overton—The Model
Pampa—Mitchell's
Port Arthur—Worth, Inc.
Shamrock—B. & L. Store
Temple—W. P. Roddy
Texarkana—I. Schwartz Co.
Tyler—Miller
Vernon—Gold Feder's
Victoria—A. & S. Levy, Inc.
Yorktown—Goodfriend's

UTAH
Logan—Milady's Shop

VERMONT
Burlington—Abernethy Clarkson-Wright, Inc.
Brattleboro—J. E. Mann
Rutland—The Vogue Shop
St. Johnsbury—The Gray Shop

VIRGINIA
Charlottesville—H. G. Eastham Shop, Inc.
Covington—The Quality Shop
Danville—L. Herman's Dept. Store
Galax—Claire's Fashion Shop
Harrisonburg—J. Ney & Son
Lynchburg—Baldwin's
Norton—The Ladies Shop
Richmond—Jonas Shop
Roanoke—Natalie Shop
Staunton—Helen G. Eastham
Suffolk—Ballard & Smith
Waynesboro—Rosenthal's Style Shop
Winchester—The Smart Shop

WASHINGTON
Long View—Columbia River Merc. Co.
Pomeroy—H. H. Cardwell
Seattle—Jerome
Spokane—The Palace Store
Yakima—Barnes-Woodin Co.

WEST VIRGINIA
Alderson—J. M. Alderson
Beckley—The Women's Shop, Inc.
Bluefield—The Vogue
Charleston—The People's Store
Clarksburg—Parson-Souders
Fairmont—J. M. Hartley
Hinton—Campbell's Quality Shop
Lewisburg—Yarid's
Logan—Mannig Clo. Co.
St. Mary's—Everly Sisters
Weston—Polly Primm Dress Shop
Wheeling—Geo. E. Stifel Co.
Williamson—Schwacter's

WISCONSIN
Appleton—Geenen D. G. Co.
Ashland—Smith Style Shop
Beaver Dam—Heuton & Wenz
Beloit—McNeany D. G. Co.
Kenosha—Betty Shops
Madison—Cinderella Shop
Milwaukee—Reei's
Monroe—Link Store
Sheboygan—Hill Bros.

WYOMING
Cheyenne—Bon Marche
Lander—The Smart Shop
Laramie—Sheridan—Kepp-Baertsch

WHO AM I?

(*Continued from page 85*)

how with his forgotten past.

Following along that line of deduction I telephoned the Boston Police Headquarters that night, after seeing my "patient" comfortably ensconced in one of the New York hospitals, where he could rest and be taken proper care of, while at the same time, he might be under scientific observation.

"I am in your hands, Captain Ayers," he said to me with a child-like trust that was touching, "and whatever you say goes—I trust you implicitly."

WHEN I first phoned the Boston police, they informed me that they had no case of a reported disappearance that tallied with my facts, but they made notes of what I told them and promised to get in touch with me if they heard anything pertinent to the case. Then I directed the sending out of the history of "Mr. Z." to all the police departments throughout the Eastern States. I was still sure that he was a Yankee, you see, even if Boston knew nothing about him.

And my hunch was right. For the next morning, I had been in my office only a few minutes before Boston was on the wire. It seemed that the police of that city had been requested by the authorities of a suburban town to assist in finding a man who had vanished from his home two weeks ago, without rhyme or reason.

We checked and counter-checked the description of this missing man, and the watch with "Cora" engraved in the case clinched the matter.

"Who was Cora?" I inquired.

"His mother," came the reply.

"Is he married?" I pursued.

"Yes, he is," was the answer.

And they said that his wife would take the first train for New York the moment she was informed of the whereabouts of her husband. They had been a devoted couple, and his wife had had private detectives searching for him, until she was driven by desperation and anxiety to ask the co-operation of the police authorities.

Her husband had passed a restful night in the hospital, and he appeared to be improved to normal standards. But when his wife flew to his bedside and knelt there, he didn't recognize her.

"Hello, Tom, dear!" she cried. "How do you feel?"

He gazed at her blankly.

"I suppose you are someone I ought to know," he said, "but I can't remember ever having seen you before."

Mrs. Jackson was made of the real stuff. She didn't betray any horrified surprise, nor go into hysterics. Instead, she said very quietly:

"Why, Tom, you should know me of all people—I am Jane—Janie, your wife!"

"Are you?" he asked. "I'm awfully sorry, but I can't seem to remember you. I'm glad to see you, though."

And he extended his hand. They shook hands as two strangers might on formal introduction.

Never in my varied life had I been witness to such a meeting between a husband and wife—and, may I add, a husband and wife married for eighteen years!

Then began the long, tiresome, often hopeless process of trying to bring Tom's memory back. Day after day, Jane would sit at his side recalling, relatives, friends, incidents to his darkened mind. Now and again, there would be a flicker:

"Yes, I seem to remember that. . . . Oh, was it Mrs. Bradshaw who burned the cocoanut cake that afternoon of the tea-party? . . . Yes, I recall a lady who broke her arm—you say it was my mother? . . ."

And so on through a thousand hints, suggestions, and mutual experiences recalled by the patient, fighting Jane. Until one memorable afternoon when Tom flashed out:

"Yes, yes, Janie—I remember you now. You are my darling wife! Weren't we married on June 10, 1914? Tell me, sweetheart!"

Jane broke down and wept for joy.

But the clouds gathered again. He didn't recognize her the next morning. His memory flared up, then faded. Alternately, this went on for several weeks, but Tom Jackson was getting better. Lapses grew fewer. And in due time Tom returned with his wife to their little town not far from Boston and Harvard.

Fully recovered, the man who lost his past wrote me one of the finest letters of appreciation I ever got, and I cherish it among my most prized mementoes.

Readers may enquire: "But *why* did Tom Jackson lose his memory?"

Science cannot answer that question yet—only God Almighty.

With his hardest thinking and all of his earnest prayers, Tom Jackson could only gather, and that dimly, that he was driving along in his automobile on a local road he had often traveled when—*wham!*—he suddenly drove into nothingness, where he went on living for nearly two weeks, then "came to" in another unknown world on a waiting-room bench.

You can hardly match that for Living Mystery.

Captain Ayers will present the second article of this thrilling series in next month's issue of MYSTERY. *Don't miss this celebrated man's own true mysteries as they appear from month to month.*

Are You Clever With a Needle

Modern Table Linen Must Be Beautiful. Here Are Six Smart Diagram Patterns

Beautiful tables make food seem more exciting! And no one has to long for lovely table linen when it's so easy to make. These diagram patterns will show you how to make six exquisite cloths. All six patterns and complete directions for 15c. Get started right away on:

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TOWER MAGAZINES, Inc.
55 Fifth Avenue **New York, N. Y.**

THE LINE-UP

(*Continued from page 6*)

by China's Scourge," in your current issue, is well worth the price of a year's subscription.

People only pay a ten cent piece for MYSTERY MAGAZINE. What, might I ask, do these blooming blighters want for a dime? Undoubtedly, a half interest in your job, Mr. Editor; but if these letters are given any thought, yours must be a job which no one could induce me to consider.

End this "Line-Up" feature; and give the "knockers" that something that all "knockers" should have—a hall, but without an audience.

I have read the letters of "knockers" so long, that I decided to give a one-man-applause-campaign, for-MYSTERY-MAGAZINE-a-fresh-outlook-on-life.

If your contributors sent in constructive criticism, it might be worth reading. But it is, and pardon my frankness, just so much literary rot, when compared with the rest of your periodical.

Here's a pat on the back, by way of conclusion, for all your staff, yes, even down to the janitors.

Yours for more helpful letters—or no letters at all.

Henry Francis Kane

Change of Heart

ATLANTA, GA.—I have been a constant reader of your MYSTERY MAGAZINE for some time but several months ago I began to grow tired of it. All the stories seemed so very much the same. Same old problems, same old characters, same old setting. Many times I didn't bother to read more than a few lines of a story because I could tell it was just going to wind up with the same old end.

I'm telling you this because I want you to know how differently I feel now. My sisters just brought me a copy of the May MYSTERY and I've just this moment finished reading "Darker Grows the Valley." I had a thousand things to do but once I'd

THE LINE-UP

begun that novel I couldn't put the magazine down till I'd finished. I think it's simply swell—and so original. I don't know—I guess I liked it because it was so real. I've never read a book before that made me think it was all really happening. The characters were so natural and the love story was so cute—not a bit overdone as it usually is. I shan't forget that.

Mrs. Netta Green

A Little Dissatisfied

JERSEY CITY, N. J.—My husband and I have been constant readers of MYSTERY MAGAZINE since it was first published and we found it hard to wait until the first of each month. We particularly liked the introduction of the complete novel which this month is exceptionally interesting and worth the entire cost of the magazine; therefore, I really have no right to voice any dissatisfaction with the remainder of the stories. There seems, however, to be a gradually decreasing number of the short mystery stories, this month's quota being only four, and these do not seem up to your old time standard. I did so like some of the old characters that appeared so often in your book.

As for Theodore Dreiser, his long drawn-out reactions and theories in one of the recent murder cases that was written up in all the newspapers down to the last detail, cannot end too soon for me. I'm not interested in his investigations and his views on the case although, of course, other people may be. I want a magazine such as MYSTERY to be entertaining and interesting. There are other magazines which would be expected to deal with current events and news topics of interest, but a "Mystery" or "Detective" magazine should be just that.

We did prefer the old size instead of the new larger size, but so long as the contents remain up to standard the size is of little moment. Please pardon my frankness, but it's only so you'll know your readers notice any change in the character of your magazine.

Mrs. R. H. Ferrier

Cheerio!

SOUTH BENFLEET, ENGLAND—I think you might care to have an English contribution to "The Line-Up." It is true I only "discovered" the MYSTERY MAGAZINE comparatively recently, but I now look for it each month and read it in preference to any magazine published on this side. In its way it certainly is unique, and lives up to its claim to being "the only magazine of its kind in the world." And for a magazine (or anything else for that matter) to live up to the claims it makes is something these days.

It is hard to criticize, as I find most of the stories good. But do spare us the infliction of any Sax Rohmer or similar stuff. These stories are so ridiculously impossible that they can only either bore or annoy the intelligent reader. Any way, if you must include them occasionally, one in a twelvemonth is enough.

I like the illustrations—they help to give realism to the stories.

Mrs. M. Scott

The Good with the Bad

ST. LOUIS, MO.—The things I do not like about MYSTERY MAGAZINE are so trivial compared with the things that I do like about it. However, I must tell you about them.

I, too, don't care for the new size. And what an arrangement! When one has a habit of reading a magazine straight through from cover to cover without any skipping about, she certainly doesn't like to read the "Line-Up" before getting to the stories.

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New DE LUXE *flesh color* 35¢

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NAME (Miss or Mrs.).....
ADDRESS.....

The book-length stories are best of all, particularly the one in your February issue. I liked the one in the book for May too, but "Blonde in the News," was uninteresting.

How about more horror stories?

Congratulations on your variety of features.

Mrs. M. Nichols

That May Issue!

PUNXSUTAWNEY, PA.—Traveling about as I do, I read a great many mystery magazines, but I'm not often moved either to praise or pan editors for the stuff they offer. But I have just read the novel in your May issue (Darker Grows the Valley) and it certainly is a wow. I usually like the full-length stories you give us, but this one is head and shoulders above anything I've read for the past year. It's got action, character, excitement, mystery and, above all, good writing. Maybe I'm a crank but I still like an author to write English instead of trying to get by with a lot of sloppy sentences and cliches. "Darker Grows the Valley" is my idea of the hundred per cent magazine story.

By the way, that French short story by Maurice Level was swell, too. Those two stories alone make your May issue the best yet this year. I'll go on buying them if I can hope to have more Level and especially—more Q. Patrick.

James Hall Witherow

A Mystery Appetite

PATON, IOWA—I never make it a practice to write to magazines, but after reading the May number of MYSTERY, I must break my rule just this once—both to praise and criticize.

First the criticism:

Although MYSTERY still has the same high quality, it seems to me it has cut down in "quantity." We realize we are still getting value of at least ten times the price we pay, but many of us would have been glad to pay twice the price for a magazine with the old number of stories.

Now the praise:

The complete novel, "Darker Grows the Valley," is one of the best mystery stories I have ever read, and the very best since Hammett's "The Thin Man." I will be greatly surprised if we don't find it on the screen in the near future.

"Was the Corpse Dead?" was the best short story with a most unusual twist to it, and I hope we have more like it.

Good work, MYSTERY, I only wish you had a twin.

Mrs. Nelson Ghem

A Fan

NORTH CHICAGO, ILL.—For once, you have done an almost impossible thing, you have made a woman hold her tongue. I have been boasting for ten years, that the weekly detective magazine I buy has no equal. Then, in January, I picked up the MYSTERY, and since then I am silent, except for recommending it to other people. Don't change it please. I have only one "kick." I wish your magazine came every week.

Mrs. R. Main

Fair Exchange

COLEMAN, TEXAS—I exchange magazine every week with a friend of mine, and last month she gave me a MYSTERY MAGAZINE. I naturally enjoy detective stories, so I was glad to get it. After reading the book-length novel, "Murder Madness," and "The Babe Gets His Man" I was converted to MYSTERY MAGAZINE for keeps. All the stories were good and I intend to be a steady customer from now on. Three cheers for your magazine. It is fine!

Mrs. Sep Miller

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DRY ROUGE

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I'd show you how ColorShine White Kid Cleaner (10c) keeps new shoes *white* and bleaches old shoes in three applications—without harming the leather. Then it polishes beautifully (*or leave dull if you prefer*), and "won't rub off." That is ColorShine White Kid Cleaner. For other white shoes, I use the special ColorShine White Cloth and Buckskin Cleaner (10c). Get both at Woolworth's and many other stores. For valuable information write *Irene Marchand*, c/o The Chieftain Mfg. Co., Baltimore, Md.

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Bring the touch of Springtime to your complexion. Lighten your skin and revive its youthful freshness with this charming, pearly-white appearance. Gently bleaches.

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Lives there a woman who hasn't looked longingly at the fashions worn by her favorite star and said to herself, "*That* would look well on me!" The new Tower Star Fashions—worn by popular stars—are pictured on page 14—and displayed in the stores listed below. For further information write Tower Star Fashions Editor, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

ALABAMA

Birmingham—New Williams
Huntsville—Mary Shop
Montgomery—Alex Rue
Troy—Rosenberg Bros.

ARIZONA

Bisbee—Smart Shop
Douglas—Hosiery & Art Shop
Phoenix—Goldwater's
Tucson—Whitehouse Dept. Store

ARKANSAS

El Dorado—J. F. Sample Co
Ft. Smith—Tilles. Inc.
Helena—H. S. Cooper
Little Rock—M. M. Cohn Co.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles—The May Co.
Oakland—Zukor's
Pomona—C. C. Bower & Co.
San Francisco—The Emporium
San Jose—M. Blum & Co.
Santa Barbara—The Smart Shop

COLORADO

Colorado Springs—C. V. Clamp
Denver—Denver D. G. Co.
Grand Junction—A. M. Harris Stores Co.
La Junta—Holbrook Costume Shop
Meeker—A. Oldland Co.
Pueblo—Colorado Supply Co.

CONNECTICUT

Bridgeport—Howland D. G. Co.
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New Haven—The Gamble-Desmond Co.
Torrington—Dankins Inc.

DELAWARE

Wilmington—Kennard-Pyle Co.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Washington—Woodward & Lothrop Inc

FLORIDA

Arcadia—Personality Shop
Gainesville—Geiger's
Miami—Burdine's
Ocala—Blocker's
Orlando—Yowell-Drew Co.
Quincy—The J. S. Shaw Co., Inc
St. Petersburg—Rutland Bros.
Tallahassee—P. W. Wilson Co.
Tampa—Ernest Maas Inc.

GEORGIA

Athens—Michaels Bros. Inc.
Atlanta—Davison-Paxon Co.
Augusta—Goldberg's
Bainbridge—Turners Shop
Blakely—Daniel's
Cordele—The Everstyle Shoppe
Macon—Mayson's
Waycross—The Fashion Shop
West Point—Cohen Brothers

ILLINOIS

Champaign—G. C. Willis
Charleston—Dress Well Shops
Chicago—Mandel Bros.
Du Quoin—Ross Store
Galesburg—Kellogg, Drake & Co.
Joliet—Dinet & Co.
Marion—C. W. Hay
Mattoon—M. M. Lewis
Mount Vernon—The Fashion Shop
Murphysboro—Ross Store
Rochelle—Whitson D. G. Co.
Rockford—Wortham's
Springfield—Myer Bros.
Streator—Opdyckes
Waukegan—Hein's
West Frankfort—Burg's

INDIANA

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Crawfordsville—Adler's, Inc.
Frankfort—The Adler Co.
Gary—H. Gordon & Sons
Greenburg—Levenstein D. G. Co.
Indianapolis—William H. Block Co.
Lebanon—Adler & Co.
Logansport—Schmitt & Kloepper
Newcastle—Woodbury's
Peru—Senger D. G. Co., Inc.
Richmond—Sittloh's
Shelbyville—Morris's
South Bend—Ellsworth's

IOWA

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Boone—The Riekenberg Co.
Cherokee—Ellerbrook Bros.
Des Moines—Younker Bros.
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Oelwein—Connor's
Sioux City—Davidson Bros. Co.

KANSAS

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Coffeyville—Cole's
Manhattan—The Parisian
Pittsburg—Newman's
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Topeka—Edward's
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Ashland—The Smart Shop
Fort Thomas—The Ft. Thomas Shoppe
Glasgow—H. W. Jolly & Son
Hazard—Major Store
Henderson—Bohn's
Louisville—Kaufman-Strauss Co.
Owensboro—Levy's, Inc.
Paris—Model Dress Shop
Somerset—The A. J. Joseph Co.
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Lafayette—Davis's
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Houlton—Bennett's
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MARYLAND

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Frederick—Gilbert's
Hagerstown—Eyerly's
Sparrows Point—Service Stores

MASSACHUSETTS

Allston—Lila Dress Shop
Boston—Wm. Filene's Sons Co
Gardner—Rose's
Haverhill—Sherry Stores Inc.
Lawrence—Russem's
Lowell—Katherine C. Mack
Salem—Besse's Apparel Shop
Springfield—Meekins, Packard & Wheat, Inc

MICHIGAN

Albion—Vaughn & Ragsdale Co.
Alpena—Thomas Gown Shop
Battle Creek—Schroeder's
Bay City—Tabor Dress Shop
Big Rapids—Wilson's
Birmingham—Twin Shop
Detroit—B. Siegel & Co.
Flint—King Clothing Co.
Goldwater—Vaughn & Ragsdale
Jackson—Jacobson's
Kalamazoo—Sanders
Lansing—F. N. Arbaugh Co.
Mt. Clemens—Marshall's Store
Saginaw—Heavenrich's

MINNESOTA

Albert Lea—Skinner-Chamberlain
Austin—M. Lewis & Co.
Detroit Lakes—L. J. Norby Co.
Duluth—Geo. A. Gray Co.
Faribault—Gray's Style Shop
Fergus Falls—Norby Dept. Store, Inc.
Hibbing—Nide's
Long Prairie—James Hart & Sons
Minneapolis—Power's
Redwood Falls—The Wm. R. Wingate Co.
Rochester—Ladies Shop
St. Paul—Golden Rule
St. Cloud—Fandel's
Stillwater—Kolliner's
Wadena—James Hart & Son
Winona—The Fashion, Inc.
Virginia—Johnny's

MISSISSIPPI

Clarksdale—The Madeira Shop
Columbus—The Fashion Center
Greenville—J. B. Tonkel Shops, Inc.
Grenada—The Leader
Jackson—Fried's Shop for Women
Meridian—Kay's, Inc.
Vicksburg—J. B. Tonkel Shops, Inc.

MISSOURI

Booneville—Sunny Day Stores
Brookfield—Vogue Shop
Chillicothe—Lewis Anderson, Inc
Hannibal—Reib's
Jefferson City—Peltason's
Kansas City—Geo. P. Peck
Kirksville—Herman's
Laplata—Tansil-Grantges
Mexico—Phillip's
Moberly—Grand Fashion Shop
St. Joseph—The Paris
Trenton—Ellis'
University City—Rubenstein's
Warrensburg—Foster's

MONTANA

Billings—Hart-Albin Co., Inc.
Chinook—Princess Pat Shoppe
Columbus—The Boston Shop
Great Falls—Stiles' Style Shop
Helena—Fischer Mill'y. Co.
Sidney—Yellowstone Merc. Co.

NEBRASKA

Fall City—Jenny's
Fremont—Marson's
Omaha—Goldstein-Chapman
Lincoln—Gold & Co.
Scottsbluff—The Hollywood Shop

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Claremont—Pelletier & Snowman
Concord—Betty Alden
Littleton—C. A. Libby Co.
Lebanon—Richardson & Langlois
Manchester—Rogers, Inc.

NEW JERSEY

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Freehold—Pearlman's Dept. Store
Guttenberg—Florence Shoppe
Jersey City—State Gown Shop
Maplewood—Constance Harris
Newark—Kresge's
New Brunswick—Zarra's
Passaic—Charlotte Shop
Paterson—Anne Shop
Trenton—Lillian Charm

NEW YORK

Albany—Davids
Baldwinsville—D. Cooper
Binghamton—Sisson Bros.-Welden Co.
Buffalo—Adam, Meldrum & Anderson
Ithaca—Pritchard's Style Shop
Newburgh—The Sonia
New York City—Macy's Cinema Shop
Norwich—Rosalyn Spec. Shop
Ogdensburg—Nathan Frank's Sons
Oneonta—Rosalyn Spec. Shop
Rochester—David's
Saranac Lake—Altman's
Sidney—Rosalyn Spec. Shop
Staten Island, St. George—Irene Dress Shoppe
Syracuse—David's
Utica—Doyle-Knower Co., Inc.
Watertown—Frank A. Empsall Co.

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque—Mosler's Smart Shop
Gallup—R. & R. Mill'y

NORTH CAROLINA

Albemarle—G. M. Dry & Sons
Asheville—Brener's
Burlington—B. A. Sellars & Sons, Inc.
Charlotte—Darling Shop
Durham—R. L. Baldwin

NORTH CAROLINA—*Cont'd*

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Greensboro—Ellis Stone & Co.
Greenville—C. Heber Forbes
Hickory—L. Herman, Inc.
High Point—Beavans Quality Shop
North Wilkesboro—Spainhour-Sydnour Co.
Red Springs—Graham Co.
Reidsville—The Hazel Shop
Rocky Mount—Rosenbloom-Levy Co.
Washington—Carter's Dress Shop
Wilmington—The Julia
Wilson—Lucille's
Winston Salem—Arcade Fashion Shop

NORTH DAKOTA

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Grand Fork—Herberger, Inc.
Jamestown—Robertson's, Inc.
Kenmore—Kaufson's, Inc.
Minot—Sgutts Store for Women
New Rockford—Rodenberg & Schwoebel
Valley City—Fair Dept. Store
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OHIO

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Athens—Slingluff's
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Altus—The Vogue
Ardmore—G. H. Henley
Blackwell—Pollyanna Shop
Bristow—The Globe Store
Chickasha—The Eagle Merc. Co.
Duncan—Hollywood Shop
Enid—Garfield's
Frederick—Mark's
Guthrie—Davenport's
Miama—Rose Bud Shoppe
Sapula—Katz Dept. Store
Sulphur—Sulphur D. G. Co.
Vinita—Zimmerman's
Wewoka—J. M. Davidson

OREGON

Medford—Adriennes

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Pottsville—Skelly's
Reading—Pomeroy's
Scranton—The Band Box
Shamokin—Worth's
Shenandoah—Goldberg's
Upper Darby—Mayer's
Wilkes-Barre—Fowler Dick & Walker
Williamsport—Worth's
York—P. Wiest's Sons

RHODE ISLAND

Woonsocket—McCarthy D. G. Co.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Anderson—G. H. Bailers
Camden—Fashion Shop
Clinton—Ladies Shoppe
Columbia—Haltiwanger's
Conway—Jerry Cox Co.
Kingstree—The Ladies Shop
Mullins—Razor Clardy Co.
Orangeburg—Mosley's Dept. Store

SOUTH DAKOTA

Aberdeen—Olwin-Angell
Huron—Erickson's
Watertown—Schaller's
Sioux Falls—Aaronson's

• Turn to page 86 for stores from Tennessee to Wyoming •

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The Modern Woman The Modern Product

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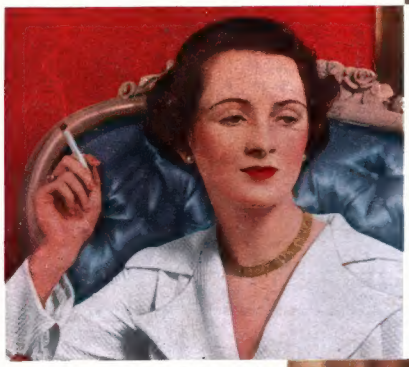
"In the enjoyment of smoking, Camels certainly make a difference," answered Miss Mary de Mumm (below). "Their flavor is so smooth and mild that you enjoy the last one as much as the first. I'm sure that's one reason they are so extremely popular." More expensive tobaccos!

NO BOTHERED NERVES FOR MRS. ALLSTON BOYER

"REFRESHING," SAYS MRS. ROBERT R. HITT



"FLAVOR," SAYS MISS MARY DE MUMM

Mildness!

"Camels have such a grand, mild flavor, and that's because they have more expensive tobaccos in them," said Miss Dorothy Paine (below). "They are the most popular cigarettes... every one is smoking them now."

Women do appreciate mildness in a cigarette, and the additional happy fact that Camels never bother the nerves—that is why they are so enthusiastic about Camels! The finer, more expensive tobaccos in Camels make a real difference—in mildness, flavor, and pleasure.

So Refreshing!

"Sometimes you are apt to smoke more than usual," said Mrs. Robert R. Hitt, "and I notice that Camels never upset my nerves. In fact, if I'm a bit tired, I find that smoking a Camel rests me—I have a sense of renewed energy."

Camels give you just enough "lift" by releasing your latent energy in a natural way. They contain finer, more expensive tobaccos—both Turkish and Domestic—than any other popular brand. Smoke one and see.

Among the many distinguished women who prefer Camel's costlier tobaccos:

MRS. NICHOLAS BIDDLE, *Philadelphia*

MISS MARY BYRD, *Richmond*

MRS. POWELL CABOT, *Boston*

MRS. THOMAS M. CARNEGIE, JR., *New York*

MRS. J GARDNER COOLIDGE, II, *Boston*

MRS. BYRD WARWICK DAVENPORT, *New York*

MRS. HENRY FIELD, *Chicago*

MRS. JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, *New York*

MRS. POTTER D'ORSAY PALMER, *Chicago*

MRS. LANGDON POST, *New York*

MISS EVELYN CAMERON WATTS, *New York*

MRS. WILLIAM T. WETMORE, *New York*

MILDNESS IS WHAT MISS DOROTHY PAINE PREFERS IN CAMELS

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Camels are made from finer, more expensive tobaccos — Turkish and Domestic — than any other popular brand